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OUR MALAY CONQUESTS.

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BY

SIR P. BENSON MAXWELL,

FORMERLY RECORDER OF PINANG, AND OF SINGAPORE AND MALACCA, AND AFTERWARDS CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

" La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure;
Nous l'allons montrer tout à l'heure."—LA FONTAINE.

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OUR MALAY CONQUESTS.

In a recent article in the *Nineteenth Century* Mr. Gladstone observed that enlargements of the Empire are rarely effected except by means that are more or less questionable, and that tend to compromise the national character in the judgment of the impartial world. The truth and force of this remark are obvious enough to us all, when it is applied to any other nation than our own. Why should we not be as sharp-sighted with our own methods of aggrandizement? If there are any qualities of which we may justly boast, the power of self-criticism is one of them. Another is a love of justice. It is in appeal to both that the following account of the steps by which we have made territorial conquests from the Malays, and the manner in which we have treated the conquered, is submitted to the public. It illustrates strikingly the great statesman's remark, and it does so in a singular manner; for the acquisitions were made in no spirit of greed. The country did not desire them, or even know that they were being made; and those who were chiefly concerned in them are men of undoubted humanity as well as of political or professional eminence. And yet, even under these conditions, much wrong has surely been done, and the national character been compromised in consequence.

Some quasi-judicial proceedings which figure in the story were too startling not to arrest the attention of one long familiar with the scene and interested in the people. How did it happen, it was natural to ask, that acts which are unheard and even undreamed of in this country, and which would excite universal reprobation here if done by any other nation, could yet be committed on natives of the East by

English officers, and be sanctioned by an English Minister? Those acts were the last of a series, and it was found that to arrive at the probably true answer to the question, it was necessary to review the whole series.

If this is now done, it is because no other person has come forward to undertake the task; and the task is one which ought to be performed, chiefly on behalf of a weak race, whose voice cannot be heard in this country, to obtain redress for some of the injustice done, and to prevent similar injustice in future; but partly also on behalf of the public, that they may consider whether it is wise to extend the Empire, with the accompanying burdens and responsibilities, in those tropical regions; and if it is, whether the means by which it has been extended there within the last few years are such as they approve or can permit to be repeated?

The history of our recent relations with the Malay Peninsula is to be found chiefly in half a dozen volumes of correspondence laid before Parliament.[1] It is not in a complete form there, however; for as the historians are the chief actors in the history, we get from them only the facts which they deem material, and put in the favourable point of view in which they themselves naturally regard them, rather than in that colder and more colourless light in which an unconcerned observer would be disposed to see them. They also, sometimes, touch but lightly or even pass over altogether facts which are nevertheless relevant. The books supply enough, however, for the present purpose, with the aid of such details and explanations as have been gathered in conversation from non-official and trustworthy sources.

[1] They are the following:—

C. 465.	Papers on proceedings at Salangore	.	1872
C. 1111.	Correspondence on Malay affairs	. .	1874
C. 1320.	Further correspondence on ditto	. .	1875
C. 1505.	Ditto ditto	. .	1876
C. 1512.	Ditto ditto	. .	1876
C. 1709.	Ditto ditto	. .	1877
	Précis of evidence printed by the Straits authorities, apparently for private circulation	. .	1876

I.

THE MALAY PENINSULA.

Our establishments in the Straits of Malacca date from 1786. In that year the East India Company, needing a station in the Bay of Bengal for their vessels engaged in the China trade, purchased from the Rajah of Quedah, or Kĕdah, as the Malays pronounce it, the desert island of Pinang, with a tract on the mainland opposite, which we called Province Wellesley, for a perpetual annuity of $10,000. In 1819, Singapore, another desert island, at the southern end of the Peninsula, was likewise purchased by the Company from a native chief, an officer of the Sultan of Johore, but virtually independent of his sovereign. The third settlement, Malacca, on the mainland, was obtained in 1824 from the Dutch, in exchange for an equally insignificant possession which we had in Sumatra, called Bencoolen. The administration of these settlements is conducted by a Governor, whose head-quarters are at Singapore. There is an Executive Council, consisting of the officer in command of the troops, the colonial secretary, the attorney-general, and two or three other officials; and a Legislative Council, which is formed of the same members, with the addition of the Chief Justice and four residents who are selected by the Governor. Pinang and Malacca have local executive officers with the title of lieutenant-governor, who are under his orders. Their population consists, in round numbers (exclusive of military and officials), of about 400 Europeans, thrice that number of Eurasians, 25,000 natives of (chiefly southern) India, 100,000 Chinese, and 147,000 Malays.

The southern end of the Malay Peninsula, extending for some 400 miles from opposite Pinang to Singapore, with a soil generally intractable, though in some parts fertile, is full of tin and other mineral wealth. It has, however, but the scantiest population, consisting of small communities of Malays thinly scattered in villages along the coast and on the banks of its streams; and here and there, in the interior, some families of negritic aborigines, called Jakuns and Semangs. Most of this part of the Peninsula is little else than an immense primeval forest, the undisturbed abode of the elephant, rhinoceros, and tiger. It is divided into several little principalities or kingdoms, ruled by sultans or rajahs, or, to use their own Malay title, Yang di pertuan (he who lords). The northernmost, Kedah, Patani, Kalentan, and Tringanu, are tributaries to the neighbouring kingdom of Siam; but Perak and Salangore on the western shore, Pahang on the eastern, Johore at the southern extremity, and a confederation of eight (once nine) little principalities in the interior (a minute Switzerland enclosed by Johore, Malacca, Salangore, and Pahang), are or were, until lately, independent. Our maps and officials describe some of them as under our protection; but there is no ground for the assertion. These States extend over an area of nearly 22,000 square miles; and it is probable that their whole Malay population does not exceed 150,000 souls (1111. 254).[1]

The Malays have the defects or vices which are found in other weak and down-trodden races. The Dutch have made them laborious in Batavia; but they are in general invincibly lazy. They are also often false, deceitful, tricky, treacherous. On the other hand, they are affectionate and gentle; and, down to the meanest peasant or fisherman, they have that quiet, grave dignity of manner which seems to be the common property of Mahometans everywhere. If they do not possess those qualities of industry and energy which make individuals valuable members of a State, it is not to be disputed that those under our rule have always been an example to the

[1] The first figure denotes the book, the second the page.

other native races in peaceful conduct and loyal attachment. In many characteristics they recall to mind the Highlanders of Scott's novels. They are passionate and punctilious; and if they sometimes commit acts of violence which bring down on them denunciations for bloodthirstiness and vindictiveness, it is because they are proud, sensitive to insult, and incapable of receiving a blow without resenting it. As an old writer says of them, "They are such horrible savages that, if you strike them, they will retaliate." They are easily led by kindness, which is by no means inconsistent with firmness; but they are too high-spirited to bow meekly to violence and contumely.

The Malays fall naturally into the usual two classes of the governing or privileged few and the mass. The former, consisting of chiefs and their numerous offspring and kindred (anak rajah), live in the same idleness as other barbarous aristocracies, oppressing and plundering the unprivileged class, the "orang kitchil," who are in their hands, as their exact equivalent, the "menu peuple" of France, was in the hands of their seigneurs and administrators before the revolution. Like them also, they are miserably poor, planting barely rice enough to keep body and soul together, and occasionally driven to find nourishment in wild fruits and roots. The Malay sovereigns, like the European kings of feudal times, are but the heads of the aristocratic body. Each village or district has its chief, who, while acknowledging the supremacy of his suzerain, is absolute lord and master of the inhabitants of his jurisdiction, levying taxes and administering justice at his pleasure.

The rivers are the only highways in these countries; and the chief source of revenue consists of the tolls which are levied on the articles of commerce and boats which pass up or down them. The village chief has a stockade on the river side to enforce these payments, which are usually appropriated to his use, subject to certain or occasional tribute for the support of the Sultan.

When the chief authority is defied, or his succession is disputed, the Sultan rarely interferes to restore peace, any

more than a king of France or emperor of Germany troubled himself with the private wars of his counts and barons. He deems it no part of his duty, and he has no adequate means to do so. The times then become more than usually evil for the inhabitants, on whom double taxes and exactions are inflicted by the contending claimants. The trader, too, who ventures up a Malay river at such times, is subjected to the same duplication of charges, and finds himself the principal contributor to the sinews of the war. Irritated, he returns to the colony, calling both sides "pirates." The term is adopted readily by the European colonists; and even governors and officials take it up and apply it indiscriminately to all who levy a kind of due with which European commerce was familiar for centuries, and the last of which disappeared only the other day in the Sound. It is impossible to estimate the amount of injustice done by this idle misapplication of a vituperative term; for it leads those who do not take the trouble of stripping facts of the colouring in which they are presented, to form very erroneous conceptions of the truth, and to deny to the objects of it every human right. It is necessary to bear this in mind in reading the Parliamentary papers on Malay affairs.

As to anything like real piracy, the people of the Peninsula are not open to the imputation of practising it. As far back as 1836 the question underwent inquiry by order of the Government of India, and it was then established that there was no ground for believing that any of the Peninsular States committed acts of piracy or sanctioned the commission of them by their subjects. It is hardly necessary to add that there has been no change in this respect, for the worse, since that time.

With a profound ignorance of the simple secret by which their wealth and population might be made to increase and multiply, it is no wonder that these little Malay communities have been stationary, or rather dwindling. But, as far as we are concerned, they were always inoffensive neighbours. They have the average civilization of Mahometans, and we have never been exposed, from them, to any of those raids

which more barbarous tribes are so prone to commit on the borders of their wealthier neighbours, and which drive the latter to the alternative of annihilating or absorbing them. It is true that a "British subject," in the shape of a colonial Chinaman or native of India, who goes up their streams or penetrates into their forests in the pursuit of gain, is liable to frequent tolls, like those which used to harass the navigator of the Rhine in the days of our fathers, and sometimes to illegal ones; and his lamentations find abundant sympathy among the merchants, European as well as Asiatic, of the neighbouring colony. It is not unnatural that they should see with impatience a land, full of untold wealth, closed hermetically to honest labour by a pack of ignorant and grasping chiefs; and it was, perhaps, a problem worth solving, how to open to human industry that fine field, in a manner worthy of ourselves.

Until ten years ago, our settlements in the Straits of Malacca were under the government of India, and during its long reign there, that government managed to live in peace and friendly intercourse with the various Malay principalities of the neighbourhood. It made treaties with them, chiefly to secure commercial advantages and the extradition of fugitive criminals. It respected their independence; and its policy generally was to leave them alone, and not to suffer its local officers to interfere in their internal affairs or disputes. The Company's employés sometimes bullied them a little, perhaps; but kept pretty well in hand by the supreme authority at Calcutta, they in the main observed fairly the line of policy laid down for their guidance. If the "British subject" complained of exactions, inquiry was made whether they were lawful. If they were, he was told that he must submit to the consequence of adventuring into the territory where they were imposed. But if they were the unlawful extortions of mere freebooters, repudiated by the recognized ruler, and the latter pleaded inability to control or punish the offenders, it was the Indian officer's duty to use force to remove the stockade and obtain compensation (1320. 24).

The Malays were generally wise enough not to provoke

their powerful neighbour, and the general result of the intercourse between them and ourselves was that they, with the traditions of what they had suffered from the Portuguese in the 16th century, and with their more recent experiences of the Dutch in the 17th and 18th, had learned to like and respect the white man, the *orang puteh*, as they always distinguish the Englishman from other Europeans.

But when the administration of our settlements in the Straits passed from the Indian Government to the Colonial Office, a change of conduct towards our Malay neighbours soon became noticeable. The first of the new governors, Sir H. Ord, was hardly installed, before he was engaged in a negotiation, bequeathed by his predecessor, with the Rajah of Kedah, for a rectification of frontier. The Rajah was willing to cede the land; but when he was called upon to sign the document of cession, he requested that it should be read to him. The English Governor deemed himself affronted by this request; and yet it was not an unwise precaution; for when the Rajah's conduct was reported to the Duke of Buckingham, who was then (1868) at the Colonial Office, the Duke told the Governor that the rajah was well justified in refusing to sign "a document which, both in form and substance, extended considerably beyond what he had agreed to" (1111. 145. Comp. Sir H. Ord's letter, 1320. 2, para. 8). In another transaction of a similar character, with the Perak Malays, the affair of the Dindings, which will be presently mentioned (inf. p. 15), Lord Granville had to interpose in the following year; and he, too, like his predecessor, took the native against the official side (1111. 136).

Sir H. Ord, however, begged only the harder for more liberty of interference. He assured Lord Kimberley that he "was hampered in his dealings with the native rulers far more than had been the case under the Indian Administration, by the evident desire of the Government to recognize no policy which might lead to a complication;" that "a useful influence" ought to be maintained over them, and that it could be maintained only "by our constant supervision over the relations of the native states with one another, and by

intervening whenever their state was such as to have a bearing not merely directly, but even remotely, upon our interests." He represented, also, that the natives were the first to recognize the necessity of our interfering with them; that the more freely we did so, the better they liked it; and that, indeed, they were disposed to regard an abstinence from such intermeddling as a proof of a want of interest in them (1320. 3).

But Lord Kimberley was inexorable. He refused in the most decided terms to extend in any way the governor's authority to deal with native affairs, or to approve any measures which would entail additions to our territory or collision with the natives (Id.) And assuredly the minister was right. Without discussing whether "our interests" require any such supervision and intervention as Sir H. Ord wished for, it is for many reasons not desirable that such a task should be committed to the local authorities of the neighbouring colony. To a certain but very limited extent, Sir H. Ord was no doubt warranted in asserting that the natives like our interference; some of them occasionally do so. The man who is worsted in a quarrel, or who for any other reason needs aid against his neighbours or his fellow-countrymen, is sure to like it; and is sure to be disappointed at learning from a sympathetic governor that the Secretary of State will not allow his subordinates to take a part in a Malay dispute. But what is that "useful influence" which he seeks, and governors long to exercise? Is it that of an impartial arbitrator in his quarrel? A native would hardly apply for this purpose to an Englishman who is new to the country, ignorant of the language and character of the inhabitants, and usually unversed in public law. What the suppliant really wants is an ally, and not a judge; and to secure the aid or countenance of an English governor, he will hasten or send to the colony, and leave no available means untried to propitiate the great man, and every other man, great and small, official and unofficial, who may have any influence over him. This course of proceeding is not altogether displeasing to those who are thus approached. If any

interference is allowed by the Colonial Minister, they learn quickly, high and low, that England has a mission to compose native strife, and to maintain peace among those who delight to squabble. It is discovered that the prestige of the British Empire is at stake in some swamp or river bank in a tropical forest; and then we have the spectacle of a number of officials, perhaps under the active canvass of an intriguing native or two, taking sides and writing despatches and memoranda in which they espouse this man's cause and combat that fellow-official's views, instead of attending closely to their own duties. The legislative council of the colony, also, is invited to take its part in these "foreign politics," which are as much within its province as the Eastern Question is within the province of the Metropolitan Board of Works; and discourses are made to it, as if it was the Imperial Parliament, and the governor was a minister responsible to it. It all ends in the despatch of a man-of-war to fight for Ali against Dolah. Next year, the tables will perhaps be turned. Ali will have given offence to his great friend, or Dolah will have trumped him in the game of propitiation, or a new governor will have arrived who does not see through his predecessor's spectacles. With a change of government may come a change in "foreign policy," and then "our interests" will require the man-of-war to return to the same scene,—this time to fight for Dolah against Ali.

It is satisfactory, no doubt, to the favoured native thus to enlist the British navy in his cause; but is the British navy kept up for such a purpose? What does England gain from such exploits? A harvest of hatred among the people whom she does not leave to settle their quarrels in their own way, without even a corresponding gratitude from the object of her patronage.

II.

PERAK.

PERAK is one of the little Malay kingdoms of the Peninsula. It adjoins the southern boundary of Province Wellesley; it has a coast-line of about 100 miles, and extends from the shore into the interior, some fifty miles. Its Malay population probably does not exceed 40,000 souls. In May, 1871, its Sultan died, and the chiefs, passing over Abdullah and Yusuf, who, though nearer to the throne by blood, were considered disqualified by "notorious demerits," elected Ismail as their Sultan, and delivered to him what our officials call the regalia, that is, the ornaments and weapons which constitute the insignia of the kingly office.

In the following October, a dispute arose between two bodies of Chinese miners who inhabited the northern district of Perak, called Larut; owing, it is believed, to the Malay governor, or Mantri, as he is called, having sold mining rights to one faction after he had sold them to another. These Chinese miners in Larut, numbering altogether probably 20,000 souls, either belong to Pinang or are closely connected with Pinang Chinese, being members of the same tribes, affiliated to the same secret societies, and dependent on the Pinang Chinese for the capital necessary for working the mines.

Both sides flew to arms; and they found recruits, arms, and stores in our settlement. For a moment there was reason to fear that the quarrel begun in the Malay forests would be fought out in our streets, which were inundated with some 2000 wounded and starving fugitives. It is un-

questionable that this state of things kept our colony in a state of hot water; its trade was brought to a stand-still and its peace threatened. The Malay chief of Larut was utterly impotent to suppress or check it; and as for the Sultan of Perak interfering, the thought probably never occurred to him.

Our colonial authorities at first prohibited the exportation of warlike stores to the seat of the contest; and if this simple course had been steadily persevered in, the miners' war would soon have died out. But the Mantri found means of persuading the colonial authorities that he was not a subordinate officer of Perak, but the independent ruler of Larut, and to induce them also to espouse the cause of the miners whom he supported. Recognizing this new "rajah," as he called him (1111. 2), Governor Ord proceeded to support him by a more than benevolent neutrality, limiting the prohibition against exportation to the Mantri's enemies. The next step was to send men-of-war's boats up the Larut river or creeks, to attack the hostile faction in their stockades, and to carry off their junks to Pinang, "where they might," the governor said, "be afforded the opportunity to establish their claim to having acted legally," in an Admiralty suit (1111. 25). They naturally felt bitterly that we had become the partisans of their enemies; they fired into our boats in self-defence at first, for which they were called "pirates;" and soon afterwards they took to piracy in reality, not from any "natural proclivities to piracy," which Sir A. Clarke was ready to find even in miners (1111. 112), but simply to provide themselves with arms and food.

It was generally believed in this country that this miners' fight was in some way mixed up with a civil war between the partisans of Ismail and Abdullah. But this was a mistake; there was no war of succession. When Sir A. Clarke arrived as Governor in the Straits of Malacca, in December, 1873, Ismail was the undisturbed reigning sovereign of Perak, which was everywhere in a state of peace, except in the northern province of Larut; and Abdullah was a fugitive (1320. 3). Though the latter had not acquiesced in the

election of his rival, he had not taken up arms to support his pretensions. With the exception of one or two of the seaboard chiefs, he had no followers, and he had neither money nor credit. His only hope was to get English intervention in his favour, and he had promised a well-known Chinaman in Singapore, one Kim Cheng, a lucrative appointment, if he would prevail on the colonial authorities to recognize him as Sultan. At this time the Chinese miners' war was still smouldering; but our vessels had put a stop to all piratical acts.

On his arrival in the colony, Sir A. Clarke had Lord Kimberley's instructions to consider the expediency of appointing Residents in any of the Malay States (1111. 39). An English merchant undertook to provide him with an occasion for the experiment. Sending for Abdullah's Chinese Mentor, he drafted a letter to the Governor, in which the Malay pretender expressed his desire to place his territory under the protection of the English flag, and "to have a man of sufficient abilities to show him a good system of government" (1111. 85). Abdullah gladly signed the paper; and the governor, thus appealed to, set off to the island of Pangkor, close to the coast of Perak, with an escort of three or four men-of-war. He summoned the Chinese headmen and Malay chiefs to meet him there. The former he reconciled and bound to keep the peace; and thenceforth they are no more heard of. To such of the Malay chiefs as attended at Pangkor, he declared, according to the colonial attorney-general, that "the British Government was pledged by treaty to the family of the Sultans of Perak, and must take care that the proper person in the line of succession was chosen, unless there was something in the character or conduct of that person to prevent his being elevated to the throne" (1111. 69). Where this extraordinary engagement is to be discovered does not appear; certainly the five treaties or instruments with Perak, which appear in the Blue Book (1111. 176) give no countenance to any right of interference on our part with the internal affairs of that country; much less to charge Great Britain with the duty of

watching over the sultanic succession, and of weeding it of impurity. But Sir A. Clarke's assertion was not questioned; nor, when he asked if there was any objection to Abdullah as Sultan (Id. 172), did any objector stand forth. And so the Malay chiefs signed a paper which has since been called the Pangkor treaty.

It purports to be an engagement by the chiefs between themselves, but dictated by the Governor. Beginning with the declaration that a state of anarchy existed in Perak (not Larut merely) owing to the want of settled government, that *certain* chiefs had confessed their inability to cope with their present difficulties, and had asked for help; and that our Government was bound by treaty stipulations to protect the kingdom and assist its rulers; it declared that the governor, in compliance with this demand for help and with a view of assisting the rulers, had proposed the following articles of arrangement as mutually beneficial to the independent rulers of Perak, their subjects and our own. Those articles then deposed Ismail, and substituted Abdullah in his stead. They provided that the new Sultan should receive an English resident and an assistant resident, whose salaries and expenses should be the first charge on the revenue of the country; whose advice must be asked and "acted upon" on all questions other than religion and custom; and under whose advice the collection and control of all revenues and the general administration should be regulated. Finally, the cession of two tracts of territory to England was demanded and made.

III.

THE DINDING AND KREAN CESSIONS.

Before proceeding with the history of the "residential system," as it has been called, it is worth while giving a moment's attention to these two territorial grants. One of them consists of an island with a few adjacent rocks called by the Malays the Pangkor islands, and by Europeans the Dindings, from the river opposite; together with a tract on the mainland. When we withdrew our naval squadron from Pinang at the general peace of 1815, the Straits of Malacca became, and continued to be for the next twenty years a favourite field for the depredations of the Lanun, Sulu and other formidable Malay pirates, who were attracted there by the rapidly growing commerce of Singapore; and those rovers established themselves on Pangkor island, as a convenient retreat and store for their booty and captives. The Perak Malays, who suffered from their ravages, offered us the island in 1826, to rid themselves of their dangerous neighbours; and a Malay instrument of cession was executed and sent to Pinang. But the East India Company rejected the present. It was, in truth, but part of a more general treaty between us and the Perak people against Siam, which the local authorities of Pinang had negotiated, but the Company refused to ratify (Indian Archip. J. vol. iv. p. 116). The island remained for ten years more in the hands of the pirates; but in 1836 our men of war reappeared in the Straits, and for ever cleared them of the scourge. For thirty years after, Pangkor remained deserted. But in 1866 the old Malay paper was found in a pigeon-hole in the

Government offices; and our officers, ignorant of its history, claimed the long-neglected gift. The Perak chiefs, equally ignorant of the rejection, of which they had no record, acquiesced in the claim. But nothing was done under the Indian Government beyond a visit or two to the island.

A couple of years later, however, when the government had been transferred to the Colonial Office, the new governor revived the claim, and presented it in a new and an expanded form. The plain opposite the island, and a range of hills beyond, were now said to be included in the cession. The plain was fertile, and a Pinang planter, on the look-out for fresh fields of enterprise, was said to regard it with covetous eyes, as well suited for the growth of rice and sugar-canes. The range of hills was reputed to be rich in minerals. The Malay document gave no countenance to this new demand, for it unequivocally granted only "the *island* (singular) of Dinding-Pangkor, and all the islands to the seaward" (pulo Dinding-Pangkor, dan sakalian pulo pulo sablah laut). But the English translation made it a grant of the *islands* (plural) of Pangkor, and made no mention of the islets to seaward; so, it was plain—thus ran the English argument—that two Pangkors at least were granted. Now, the conical hill at the northern end of the range is called Pangkor, and Malays sometimes call a hill a "pulo" (island), therefore that hill must be the second Pangkor of the cession. Further, in ceding it, the Malays must have ceded incidentally the whole range, and incidentally, too, the plain between it and the sea (1111. 114, &c.).

This closely serried logic seemed irresistible to the official mind, and yet the Malays contested it. They admitted that they did sometimes nickname an isolated hill an island, just as we sometimes call a cliff a "head," but they said that they had never called this particular hill (the "false Pangkor" of navigators) a "pulo," but, on the contrary, had named it "darat," or "inland," to distinguish it from the "pulo." Fortunately for the Malays, the story of this controversy reached the ears of Lord Stanley of Alderley, who communicated it to Lord Granville, then at the head of the

colonial department; and as the latter had not heard about it from the Governor, he wrote to him for an explanation. The explanation came; it left the history of the cession in obscurity, and left the interpretational niceties equally in the dark; but it made something, in a vague way, of the "piracy" which the possession of the island might be expected to check; and it gave general assurances that no occupation of foreign territory was intended without the previous authorization of the Secretary of State. Lord Granville expressed, in reply, a decided indisposition to sanction any extension of our responsibilities in that part of the world (1111. 139); and his successor, Lord Kimberley, repeated the declaration, with the prohibition, in addition, even "to initiate any proposal as to change in our relations with native states, without instructions from home" (1111. 140).

It is not altogether foreign to this history to mention that Lord Granville, apparently astonished to hear of piracy in the Straits of Malacca, called for a report on its existing state. As it had been extinguished in 1836, Sir H. Ord might safely assure him, as he did, that "there was not," when he wrote, in 1870, "a sign of these practices at the Dindings;" but he put forward on the authority of the Lieutenant-Governor of Pinang rather than his own, the additional asseveration which attributed this happy condition of things to the constant visits paid to the locality during the last three years (that is, since the beginning of the Colonial Office régime) by government vessels and officials, and also to the remarkable precaution which had, during the same period, been taken, of having one native constable residing on the island of Pangkor, "who keeps watch over all that goes on, and would report such matters to Pinang" (1111. 39), if matters so terrible went on.

Such was the position of this Pangkor claim when Sir A. Clarke arrived in the Straits of Malacca at the end of 1873. Dependent on local sources of information, and early taught to believe that the Malays of the Peninsula were piratical hordes, and that every village stockade was a mere receptacle of freebooters, he learned also that the Dindings had

"from time immemorial" been the resort of pirates (1111. 250), and that "the rightful ownership" of them had been "for years a mooted question" (Id. 73). But now was the time for settling mooted questions; and this one was settled in the following manner:—The Pangkor treaty, after declaring that the instrument of cession had been misunderstood, and that it ought to be "readjusted" "so as to carry into effect the intention of the framers thereof," proceeded to define the boundaries by lines, beginning from a hill named Sigari. There is a hill of that name (slightly mis-spelt "Saggai" on our map) a little to the north of the mainland Pangkor hill; and lines drawn from it according to the treaty would include just a little more than the plain and hills which Sir H. Ord coveted and Lord Granville would not suffer to be taken. This, the Malays say, is the extent of the cession intended at Pangkor. But there is another Sigari, far away to the north-east; and the boundaries were drawn on our map by lines from this hill, the effect of which was to make the size of the ceded territory about ten times as great. There may possibly have been some misunderstanding in this matter; but if the language of the treaty may be taken as indicating the common intentions of the English and Malays, it is difficult to conceive that more territory could have been in contemplation than the maximum that had ever been previously claimed.

The other tract of land which was ceded adjoined the boundary of our Province Wellesley. That boundary was the Krean; and it was thought desirable, for police purposes, to acquire a strip of land on the other side of that river. It was proposed that the southern water-shed of the river, or the portion of land draining into the Krean, should become British territory for the rectification of our southern boundary; and, according to the colonial Attorney-General, it was explained to the native chiefs that no land was desired higher up the river than the boundary-line between Kedah and Province Wellesley (1111. 174). This new line, extending as far as the eastern boundary of our province, encloses about thirty square miles of land; and Sir A. Clarke marked off on a

map a piece of this extent so bounded (Blue-book, C. 1111, p. 85). But when Sir W. Jervois succeeded to the government of the Straits Settlements, less than a year and a half later, he found that this boundary had so shifted as to enclose 200 instead of thirty square miles. It had been discovered that far in the interior, a long way to the eastward of Province Wellesley, there were some rich mines and many miners at a place called Salamah; and the terms of the cession must have undergone a new interpretation to give it the elasticity needed to reach them. The "water-shed of the Krean" was read unembarrassed by the context which alluded to the rectification of our boundary, or by the verbal assurances given to the chiefs; and so it reached the desired mines. It even trenched on the territory of the Rajah of Kedah, who was urged to make a road, of no use to himself, over another part of his country, as it was of great importance to us, he was told, that we should have a ready means of access to the mines (1505. 5). This matter came under Sir W. Jervois' notice very soon after his arrival in the colony. The Malays thought it "too bad;" and one of them, the Mantri, had been heard to observe upon it in terms not very flattering to our character for good faith. The new Governor, too, with creditable shame, shrank from such a pretension; and he wrote to the Colonial Minister that he proposed to restore the boundary to pretty nearly the line originally drawn by the author of the Pangkor treaty.

But the subject was already losing importance; for under that treaty we were making ourselves the masters of Perak; and it was becoming immaterial whether the Salamah mines fell north or south of the line which separated our old from our new province. Sir W. Jervois' representation elicited no remark from the Colonial Minister at the time; and the only trace of his view of it is to be found in a despatch a year later, when he touched on the subject incidentally with the remark that it was a "delicate matter" (1512. 81).

IV.

THE RESIDENTIAL SYSTEM IN PERAK.

WHEN Abdullah was installed by us on the seaboard of Perak, he was recognized as sovereign only by a few chiefs. The interior, that is, the greater part of the country, remained faithful to Ismail. From the beginning, the chiefs who signed the treaty of Pangkor seem to have felt much uneasiness about that act. It is said that they had hardly got away from the English men-of-war before they began to whisper to each other their fears that a desire to get possession of their country was at the bottom of our intervention in their affairs (Précis 4). The revival of the Pangkor claim did not give them a favourable impression of our disinterestedness (Id.); and their suspicions were not removed by our grasp at the Salamah mines. But it was not until the "Residential system" had begun to work, that they saw plainly what they had brought upon their country.

There was a hitch about the selection of a Resident for Perak; for ten months elapsed before one was appointed. In the interval, Sir A. Clarke endeavoured to induce Ismail to accept Abdullah's sovereignty, and to give up to him the insignia of the kingly office, to the possession of which, by their rulers, the Malays attach much importance. He conferred on him the title of ex-Sultan, and was willing even to call him "Beginda" or Majesty. He also offered him an annuity of $12,000 a year, payable out of the revenues of his own kingdom, besides exemption from all taxes and duties. But Ismail declined to accept his own dethronement or the other provisions of the treaty. He and his chiefs were

dreaming of an embassy to England to appeal to Parliament against that treaty; and one of them, the Mantri, went so far in the prosecution of this scheme as to give a Pinang lawyer $12,000 (one account says $25,000—Précis 4) to aid them in some way or other. But history goes no farther. If the lawyer pleaded their cause, no trace of his labours is to be found. Within a month after the treaty, Abdullah, too, is found consulting another Pinang lawyer about getting the cession of the Dindings rescinded (Id.). On all sides the Malays regarded the Pangkor transaction as one which ought not to stand, and would be set aside in England, if England knew anything about it.

An Assistant Resident was appointed, immediately after the treaty, to Larut. The gentleman selected was Captain Speedy, who had but shortly before entered into the Mantri's service, and had been employed by him to raise some Sikh sepoys to fight the miners. He was now to be the adviser of his former employer; his recruits were converted into his body guard; a handsome "residency" was built for him, and he was provided with a gorgeous retinue of Chinese attendants and a menagerie of elephants, suitable to the dignity and comfort of an Oriental nabob, or rather of one who lords over nabobs. His own description of his method of advising showed that it consisted simply in pushing his pupil off the box, and gathering the reins of administration into his own hands; beginning with an ukase for abolishing secret societies among the Chinese, and another introducing the copper currency of the colony into his kingdom, to the exclusion of every other (1320. 70, 75).

Towards the end of the year (1874) Sir A. Clarke appointed Mr. Birch, then the Secretary of the Colony, as Resident of Perak; and the new Resident lost no time in entering upon his duties.

And here it may be adviseable to consider what were those duties. It can hardly be doubted that Lord Kimberley's intention was that the Resident should be simply an envoy with the commission to interfere by advice, and advice alone,

in the internal administration of the little state to which he was accredited. The Resident was to be paid by us and to be sent only with the full concurrence of the native ruler (39); and such an arrangement, in its very nature, would be liable to be put an end to whenever we got tired of advising, or the native chief of being advised. Though the Colonial Office sent no instructions to define the functions of the Resident, it may be assumed that it accepted Sir A. Clarke's early views on that subject as satisfactory and sufficient; and, according to him, the Residents were to be "counsellors," "to *teach* the chiefs the great and yet simple principles of good government," "to *show* them the most practicable and feasible methods of opening up their countries," "to *instruct* them in the easiest methods of collecting the revenue," and "to *induce* them to select proper men for collecting it" (1111. 109, 110). What could be simpler or more promising than such a scheme? If it failed, we should withdraw our counsellor; if it succeeded, we might perhaps see the great Malay forests gradually, under the inspiration of our wise counsels, attracting crowds of those industrious Chinese to whose energy and labour our own Straits Settlements are mainly indebted for their prosperity. And why should it not succeed? Thirty years ago, the native chief of Johore had, under the counsels of the late Mr. Ker, an English merchant at Singapore, been brought to see that the road to wealth and prosperity lay, not in mulcting trade and industry, but in protecting life and property; and in a few years he found Chinese flocking into his country and his revenue increasing rapidly. What that merchant had done, an official might surely do with equal success. At all events, the Resident was to be a counsellor and instructor only.

While still left without an English adviser, Abdullah had, in the course of the summer of 1874, as is usual in those countries, even in our own colony, farmed a part of the revenue. He had let, for a short period, the tolls receivable at the mouth of the Perak river to a Chinaman for $26,000. But he had done so without asking Sir A. Clarke's leave, and even against the warning of the colonial Attorney-

General (Précis 5); and this conduct seems to have been regarded as contumacious, at Singapore. On the night of his arrival, Nov. 4, 1874, the new Resident sent for the Chinaman who had bought the right to the tolls, informed him that his contract was not sanctioned, and forbade him to receive any dues from that time forth. On the following morning he reproved Abdullah for having presumed to raise money without the Governor's leave. Now, the contract between the Sultan and the Chinaman was perfectly valid; the Sultan was not bound to consult anybody but the Resident; and he had had no Resident to consult. It is plain, then, that this first step of the Resident was in excess of his duty, was unjust to both the Sultan and his farmer, and was as offensive as it was unjust.

Two days later, he laid before Abdullah and his chiefs a programme for the future government of the country, especially as regarded the collection of the revenue (1709. 97). It has been already mentioned that the principal income of a Malay chief is derived from the tolls on the traffic passing up and down the river on the bank of which his village stands. That such tolls are oppressive and irritating, and injurious to commerce, is what nobody contests; and that they should be got rid of is obviously desirable. But they are established and lawful rights; and it is idle to attempt to conceal this by calling them "black-mail," and the chief's stockade a "squeezing place." It is worse than idle to confiscate them. Such a violation of the rights of property is not to be defended by this cheap expedient of vituperation. Now this programme of the Resident proposed to abolish completely all these rights to tolls; and it provided no compensation to the chiefs for their loss.

"Arrangements," we are told, "had not been perfected for indemnifying the principal chiefs and rulers for loss of power and profit" (1512. 15); and all the hard words lavished on the tolls and their receivers are unavailing to conceal the stubborn fact that the proposed abolition was a confiscation of vested and legal rights. Mr. Birch's scheme was probably based on his instructions (of which scraps are quoted

here and there in the Parliamentary papers), which directed him to "put down unlawful exactions and the extortions of freebooters, levies of black-mail and persons pretending authority to levy dues" (1512. 9). But what is to be said of the justice and wisdom of a scheme for putting down illegal demands by prohibiting all legal demands as well? Was this a lesson in respect for the rights of property which a nation so tender of its vested interests at home had to offer to the Malays? The chiefs to whom the proposal was made felt that it was not only the independence of their country, but their own proprietary rights which were at stake; and a strong feeling against the new Resident arose (1709. 97).

Leaving them for a while to consider the new scheme, the Resident, early in December, visited the mines of Bidor. Gathering here, from representations made to him and from personal inquiries, that a certain Rajah Nga was "a bad character," who "levied black-mail from the miners," he issued an order that the man should no longer be suffered to reside at Bidor; and the better to insure the execution of his decree he had his house burnt down. This, we are told, was to be "a warning to others;" and it would seem that the warning was repeated afterwards in other cases; for it is said by a writer in the *Times* (Dec. 25, 1875), that "on several occasions Mr. Birch had to resort to strong measures, such as burning the houses of refractory headmen, by way of example." Now, Rajah Nga's "black-mail" was simply rent payable to his wife, who was the proprietor of the land in which the mines were situated. Fancy burning down the house of one of our own territorial magnates, for the crime of receiving rent from the lessees of his mines, and hoping to justify the act by giving the rent the opprobrious name of "black-mail." The excuse offered for the Resident is that "he was not aware of these facts at the time;" which means that he banished the Malay chief, and burnt him out of house and home, without hearing him in his defence (Précis of Evid. 6). This was the first specimen

of the new judicial procedure, which was to be afterwards so fully developed.

Returning from Bidor, the Resident began to press for the adoption of his scheme of government and finance. It was approved by the Governor (1505. 32); and Abdullah is said to have professed acquiescence in its general principles; but when it came to signing any paper for carrying it out, he always put off the question "with frivolous excuses." With the view of getting rid at once and for ever of such delays, Mr. Birch, on the 31st of January, 1875, proposed to Abdullah to sign a decree appointing the Resident and a Malay to act for the Sultan "in all matters connected with the collection and expenditure of the revenue;" to appoint local officers, and generally to arrange the whole administration of the country; it being provided that if the Malay colleague was absent, the Resident should exercise all these powers without him (Précis of Evid.). Abdullah rejected the advice to sign such a decree; and to avoid personal discussions, he appointed four chiefs to represent him with the Resident in all matters of State.

V.

THE PANGKOR TREATY INTERPRETED.

This refusal was reported to Sir Andrew Clarke, and the latter thereupon gave Abdullah the following explanation of his position under the treaty. When the Sultan and his chiefs signed the engagement to "act upon" the Resident's advice, and to regulate the revenues and the general administration under that advice, "they bound themselves not to collect any taxes whatsoever; such taxes and all revenues being entirely in the hands of the British Resident." By taking taxes which the Resident wished to abolish, and imposing new taxes, the Sultan was "breaking the Pangkor engagement;" and to put an end to such conduct, the Governor sent his own proclamation regarding the collection of the revenue of Perak; and it was to be "a warning to every one, whether rajah or ryot, never to attempt to collect any tax or any sort of revenue, without distinct written instructions from the Resident." But there was still another surprise for the Sultan. He had to learn that his own personal liberty, like the revenue of his kingdom, had passed into the Resident's hands. "If, at any time," Sir A. Clarke told him, he "desired to visit Larut or Pinang or other places," he should consult "our Resident;" and the Governor "did not doubt" that "if it was politic for him at the time to leave his country or to visit such places, the Resident would do everything in his power to meet the Sultan's views" (1320. 93; also 1505. 39).

This interpretation of the Pangkor treaty illustrates well the rule of international law, established by practice if not

in principle, that when two nations make a treaty, the right of interpreting it falls to the stronger. Here, out of an undertaking by the Malays to regulate their revenue by the advice of a Resident, Sir A. Clarke evolved the result, that the Governor of Singapore, because he instructed that officer, was himself also entitled to advise them directly; nay more, that without even clothing the act in the garb of advice, he had plenary authority to tax and administer Perak at his absolute discretion, to say nothing of the pretension to restrain the personal liberty of the Sultan.

Under the influence of what magic potion had the Governor conceived that he had any more power to regulate the taxes of Perak by his own edicts than to tax China or Japan?

Not less extraordinary was the conception that the treaty had placed the revenue in the hands of the Resident. Does he who asks advice for the management of his property, even though he undertakes to act upon it, thereby give up his property? There is no ground for the assertion. But what if the adviser should recommend its transfer to himself? The answer is that such advice, to say nothing of its honesty, would be foreign to what was asked. The question is how is the property to be managed; the advice offered is how it shall be disposed of—which is no answer. The proposal to confiscate the private revenue of chiefs was not advice for the regulation of the public revenue; and the proposal to transfer the Sultan's powers to the Resident was not advice in government.

While he was reproving the Sultan for breaking his engagements, the Governor was himself seriously misinterpreting them, and putting forward pretensions under colour of them, which were incapable of being supported.

The best comment on these interpretations of the treaty which Sir A. Clarke addressed to Abdullah, is the interpretation of it which he had addressed at an earlier date to the Colonial Minister (sup. p. 22), when he laid down that the Resident's duty was simply to teach the native ruler how *he* should govern, how *he* should regulate *his* revenue and administer justice,

And when Abdullah's request for an adviser was expanded in the treaty into an undertaking to "act" upon the advice, is it to be supposed that either party understood the superadded words as going materially beyond the original design? "Such an engagement," as Sir W. Jervois afterwards observed, would "virtually throw the government of the country into the hands of the Resident." Unquestionably, if the dry literal interpretation could be accepted as the true one; but a conclusion so outrageous shows that this could not be the true interpretation. The letter of all engagements must be construed reasonably; and it must be strained, if necessary, to avoid a meaning which would impute enormous folly to one party and enormous dishonesty to the other. To construe this treaty as the literal sense invites, would be to impute to a man of high character the intention to despoil the Malays by a miserable fraud. Honestly, the treaty could mean no more than that the Sultan would give serious attention to the advice offered. If it meant more, it was an unconscientious bargain which a Malay might be timid or silly enough to make, but which Sir A. Clarke would have been the last man either to trick or to browbeat him into making. If he afterwards put a new reading on the words, it is to be remembered that on such a question he would necessarily be much in the hands of his local advisers; and his success in other quarters may have made him impatient of the opposition which he encountered from the creature who owed the Sultanate to him, and too ready to seize any weapon put into his hand to beat it down.

VI.

INCIDENTS OF THE RESIDENTIAL SYSTEM IN PERAK.

THE Malays were now told in effect that while they imagined they were treating for a guide, they had accepted a master, and had signed away their country to a foreign rule. That rule had begun with threats of confiscation; the warning given by the example made of Rajah Nga had not made a favourable impression, and other incidents were in store which would have tried the patience of a more long-suffering race than the Malays.

Like other orientals, they have slaves, and the despatches allude to Mr. Birch's feelings of humanity as prompting him to protect runaway slaves. When the cases are examined, the slaves are found to be girls, and girls only. On one occasion, two of Abdullah's women find their way to the Residency; they are demanded by one of his men, but he is sent away because he is not armed with a written authority from his master, and when he returns, the women have disappeared (1709. 16). On another, a servant of the Resident marries a girl of Abdullah's household without Abdullah's consent, and consequently to the general indignation of the Malays at what was an offence against their chief and their customs (Précis, 15). Other women, later in the year, are found deserting the Sultan or other chiefs for the Residency (1709. 18, 28). A chief calls on the Resident to give up a girl who had done so, and the British officer does not tell him that slavery cannot be recognized where the British flag flies; he invites him to search the Residency (1505. 192). The search is made, but it is fruit-

less, for the Resident had told the woman, she states, to conceal herself in the adjoining jungle. The next day he takes her and another, disguised in Chinese dress, in his own boat, to Pangkor (1709. 19; 1505. 15). Sir W. Jervois felt bound, once, to order that two fugitive women should be restored (1709. 24).

These are facts which cannot be honestly omitted in any attempt to represent truly the position of the Malays, and what they had to endure at our hands since our intervention in their affairs. It is necessary only to bear in mind that the Resident did not live alone at the Residency. A sepoy guard and a body of policemen were quartered there, besides his official subordinates and personal attendants.

Besides this kind of slavery, there was in Perak, as in other Malay countries, the institution of debt-slavery, resembling that of the Mosaic law, except that the bondman was not released in the year of jubilee. Man has always been cruel to his debtor, from the earliest dawn of history to within living memory. The Malays did not, like the fathers of their civilizing friends, build jails and immure those who owed money, for a term which might be lifelong, at the discretion of their creditors; but their customary law, engrafted on the Mahometan, gave the creditor the right to the labour of his debtor, who became his bondman. This primitive and oppressive law led to great abuses; and nothing could be more natural than that it should attract the attention and try the patience of the Englishmen who saw it and its excesses in operation. It was a custom indeed, and we had bound ourselves to respect the Malay customs; but it would probably not have been difficult to persuade the Perak chiefs to put an end to it. Their neighbour, the Rajah of Kedah, abolished it some years ago; and his younger brother, the viceroy of Salangore, did the same thing more recently in the last-named country. But our officials had only threats and invectives at their command. Forgetting, in a part of the world, too, where Sir Stamford Raffles had been sharply censured for his humanitarianism in meddling with slavery, that their own fathers had long maintained a much more

hateful form of it for the good of trade, they were unable to make a little temporary allowance for the poor backward native who was, by a few short years, less advanced than themselves; and were for putting down the evil with a high hand, in breach of their own engagements.

Sir A. Clarke's letter did not produce immediate submission. In May, Abdullah sent a deputation to Singapore to lay his and his countrymen's grievances before him. It consisted of three or four chiefs; and they begged that the Governor would direct the Resident not to interfere in questions of religion and custom; to give up slaves who ran away, and not to give them in marriage to his policemen; not to abolish taxes which the chiefs had been accustomed to receive for their own use; and generally, not to act without consulting the Sultan. Sir A. Clarke, who was on the point of retiring from the government of the Straits Settlements to fill a more important office in India, wrote to the Sultan, in reply to these representations, that "all his troubles arose from a want of confidence, and a want of thought, which was most unreasonable" (1709. 102): and with this parting admonition, the Malay found himself face to face with a new Governor, Sir W. Jervois, who was sworn in on the 10th of May, 1875. The deputation saw him; but it would seem that they did not renew their representations to him. They returned to their jungles; and the new Governor was not long in learning from the Resident that they were men of no influence, or of mischievous disposition, and that their Sultan was unpopular, heedless of advice, growing in duplicity, and desirous of breaking all his Pangkor engagements (1505. 40).

VII.

INTERVENTION IN SALANGORE.

Sir A. Clarke had not confined the residential experiment to Perak. He introduced it into two other native states. And here it may not be superfluous to appeal to the reader's patience; for though the story is simple, Oriental names, especially when they become numerous, are apt to confuse. Immediately south of Perak is another little Malay state, called Salangore, with a capital and fort of the same name. Its inhabitants are said to have much of the blood, and also of the hot temper and energy of the Bugis, a portion of the Malay family which inhabits the island of Celebes, far to the eastward. But to us they were inoffensive neighbours; and we heard little to turn our attention to them, until the year 1866. In that year, an English merchant, whom everybody connected with Singapore knows and respects, with two Chinese colleagues, took from one of the Salangore chiefs, Abdullah, a connexion by marriage of the Sultan of the country, the farm of the tolls leviable on the river Kallang. By Malay custom, a prince is exempt from toll, just as our royal family is in England; but when, one day, Mahdie, a nephew of the Sultan, claimed this privilege, the new toll collectors refused to recognize it. Resenting this indignity, the Malay attacked them with a body of his followers, and drove them, and Abdullah also, out of the district. Abdullah fled to Malacca, where he died soon afterwards. The Englishman appealed to the Sultan; but the Sultan was unwilling or unable to give him redress. So public opinion in the Straits proclaimed him an opium-smoking imbecile, and his nephew a pirate.

The victor remained for some time in quiet possession of his new conquest, paying the Sultan some portion of the tolls. But the uncle and nephew quarrelled, probably on this question of money. Then Abdullah's young son appears on the scene, and we find one Tunku Kudin, brother and heir presumptive of the Rajah of Kedah, marrying a daughter of the Sultan, and despatched to turn Mahdie out and to reinstate Abdullah's heir. Whether Kim Cheng (p. 13), one of the Chinese partners in the Kallang speculation, was altogether a stranger to these new circumstances, has been doubted.

Mahdie was blockaded in Malay fashion, and ultimately he was forced to leave his conquest. This was in 1870. A year elapses; and when we next catch a glimpse of the actors, Tunku Kudin has fallen into disgrace, (the Sultan suspecting him of the design of supplanting him,) and is a frequent visitor at Singapore, where he evidently succeeds remarkably in ingratiating himself; and Mahdie is an important person at the port of Salangore, where the Sultan's son, Musa, is in command, at the time when one of our men-of-war shelled and destroyed that place, in an ignoble quarrel of our own making.

This was in July, 1871. Some Chinese, unconnected, apparently, with Salangore or its inhabitants, after murdering almost everybody on board a Pinang-owned junk, had taken the vessel to that port; and we called on the native chiefs to give up the criminals. They readily gave up six men, but refused a seventh, against whom it does not appear that there was any proof, and drew their weapons on our police when the latter attempted to arrest the man in defiance of them. The temporary administrator of the Colony (the Governor was absent), instead of complaining to the Sultan of the misconduct of his officers, if misconduct there was, sent a man-of-war to seize and punish the delinquents. The Salangore men resented this attempt on their chiefs on their own soil, and fired on those who made it. The Rinaldo destroyed the town in consequence, killing a considerable number of the inhabitants (465. 10).

This was tolerably severe: for what had the Malays

done to justify such a deed? Our policemen were clearly in the wrong in attempting to arrest a man on Malay soil, not only without the leave but against the orders of its rulers; and our sailors were equally in the wrong in endeavouring to seize those rulers and carry them off to their ship for punishment. The Malays did no more than exercise their just rights, according to every principle of natural justice and public law, in repelling those attacks; and they might well have awakened in brave men some admiration for their courage in asserting their rights against so formidable an enemy. But this was nothing compared to what followed. Two of our officials, Mr. Birch, then Colonial Secretary, and Mr. C. Irving, the Auditor of the Colony, set off straightway, in H.M.S. Teazer, to the Sultan, who was residing at Langat, and required him, under threats of the most serious and immediate consequences (465. 22, 45), to appoint his suspected son-in-law, Tunku Kudin, to be his viceroy. By a curious coincidence, Tunku Kudin was met by them at sea, on their way to the Sultan. The old man begged hard that if he must abdicate, it might be in favour of one of his sons, or at least that Tunku Kudin should be controlled by a council. But he was told that such schemes would not "work," and Tunku Kudin must be his viceroy without check or control, and what was more, without delay. The Teazer's ill-looking guns supported the English view of the subject, and the Sultan submitted. This was in August, 1871.

Lord Kimberley, who was then at the Colonial Office, misled by the Administrator's report into fancying that the murderers were Salangore men and probably followers of Mahdie, accepted as true the asseverations of the officials, that Salangore was a notorious nest of pirates (445. 2, 8), (afterwards recanted, 445. 36); that its defenders were rebels as well as pirates, and that the Sultan was "highly delighted" at the destruction of the place (465. 21); and though he seems not to have liked that destruction quite as much as the Sultan, he approved of the rest of the proceedings (Sept. 26, 1871, 465. 31); apparently without inquiring

on what grounds the Sultan had been deposed, and his sons set aside, or why his son-in-law had been selected to reign in his stead. Admiral Kellett, too, approved at first of the proceedings of both the Rinaldo and the Teazer (465. 36, 38). But subsequent reflection modified the general satisfaction. The Admiral issued an order in the following October (in which Lord Kimberley concurred), directing that such expeditions "for the suppression of piracy" should not be again undertaken without reference to him, unless immediate action was absolutely necessary, in which case care was to be taken that such action was confined to the ordinary duties of the Navy, and that "diplomatic and political affairs" were carefully avoided (465. 44, 46).

The proceedings of our Colonial officers, far from restoring peace to Salangore, only stirred up the embers of strife. Tunku Kudin, who had managed to make for himself powerful friends at Singapore, was heartily detested by the Salangore Malays.

Mahdie and other native chiefs took up arms against him, secretly supported by the Sultan; and they figure throughout in the official papers as freebooters and pirates. Tunku Kudin blockaded his father-in-law in his own river, and he had the "moral support" of our Governor, who visited him in the troubled waters of his vice-kingdom, giving him much paternal advice and encouragement, and scolding the old Sultan. It went hard with Kudin at times; his enemies got possession of the Salangore river and the upper course of the Kallang; and it was a question whether he would be able to hold his footing much longer in the country. Then the fire began to spread. Mahdie's party found an ally in the neighbouring state of Sungei Ujong; and Sir H. Ord, his own hands being tied by Lord Kimberley, incited the Rajahs of Kedah and Pahang to come to the viceroy's aid (1111. 3, and 1320. 3). Then the latter, in turn, instigated Rambau to attack Sungei Ujong for sympathizing with his enemies. The Chief of Johore, a little farther south, had all his feelings enlisted in favour of Mahdie and the national party; and if he did not throw himself into the fray, it was

because he feared to offend his friend, the Governor of the English colony. Such were the rapidly spreading advantages which the Malays were reaping from the middle of 1871 to the beginning of 1874, from that white intervention in their internal affairs which they were said to like so much.

Of course a ruler in Tunku Kudin's position saw a saviour of society in an English Resident; and he gladly welcomed the officers whom Sir A. Clarke sent to reassure and support the Sultan of Salangore by their constant presence (1320. 7). The principal of them was Mr. Davidson, a lawyer of considerable reputation and practice at Singapore, and who was in many respects highly qualified for the post; for he had good sense, calm temper, and intimate knowledge of the Malays, as well as sympathy and consideration for them. But he was a large creditor of Tunku Kudin; his personal interests were much involved in the fortunes of the Viceroy, and for this reason his appointment was open to question.

It is but just to Mr. Davidson, however, to say that all accounts concur in describing him as having been an efficient officer and as having won the most friendly feelings of the Salangore people.

VIII.

SUNGEI UJONG UNDER THE BRITISH FLAG.

THERE was another Malay chief who saw at a very early period that the new Residential system might be turned to advantage for the support of his little throne. This was the Klana, to give him his peculiar title, of Sungei Ujong, a little state which borders on the south and east of Salangore, and forms one of the eight or nine confederated cantons near Malacca.

This personage had a shaky title to his dignity; he had a hostile neighbour in Perba, the ruler of the adjoining state of Rambau, from which Sungei Ujong is separated by the river Lingie; and he had an equally hostile subject or rival at home in a chief called the Bandar. A Malay, under such a combination of adverse circumstances, was not likely to neglect the course of seeking an alliance in the English colony. He seems to have had a fast friend in the Lieut.-Governor of Malacca; but, on the other hand, he had got into bad odour with Governor Ord for supporting Tunku Kudin's enemies. We learn that a correspondence passed between the Lieut.-Governor and the Colonial Secretary in which the sides of the two Malay heroes were espoused and combated respectively, and that the Klana was finally adjudged "a meddlesome and mischievous intrigner" (1320. 30). Then he got into more trouble with the same Governor because he had been stupid enough to recognize Mustapha as the chief of Rambau, while Sir H. Ord regarded Perba as the true chief (Id. 32). Perba had a stockade on the Lingie which levied toll on vessels and cargoes going up or

down the river to the Sungei Ujong mines; and when the Klana ordered arms from Europe to fight with his Rambau enemy, Sir H. Ord, without a shadow of right, would not suffer them to leave Singapore (35).

But when Sir A. Clarke arrived in the Straits the tables were turned. Fortune began to smile on the Klana; it was Perba's turn to come in for her frowns. He had, it is true, just about this time, finally beaten Mustapha and been elected the ruler of Rambau by its chiefs. But the new Governor was hardly established a fortnight before he received a complaint from the Klana that the obnoxious Perba was "exacting black mail." The Governor was ready to interfere; but he was in a state of profound ignorance on the subject; and he could get no light from his advisers; for Sir H. Ord, according to the Attorney-General, "had conducted the affairs personally;" and so "no information was available on which to act" (1320. 34). After the Pangkor business, however, the matter was again taken up. But the Cimmerian darkness in which Sir H. Ord had left the "personally-conducted" affairs had not been dispelled; and so Sir A. Clarke summoned Perba and Mustapha, and the Klana, to Singapore to give him some insight into the field of his intended interference. The two former preferred sending agents to attending in person; but the Klana appeared at Government House; and as Perba did not, in the meanwhile, suspend his fiscal proceedings at the Bukit Tiga stockades, he was reproached by the Governor for his "breach of faith in recommencing disturbances in the middle of negotiations" (35). The Klana, also, got those arms which Sir H. Ord had detained for two years. But he had first to sign a strange paper in English, which reads like a bond gone mad, from which it may be collected that he engaged to govern his lieges in the eternal principles of justice and equity, to keep the river Lingie open to lawful traffic and commerce, and prevent any persons from exacting dues on the navigation, other than the fair dues originally put on it for the protection and convenience of traders (1320. 41). He was also to protect travellers, and not to protect the enemies of Great Britain, &c.

In return, he was to have "the moral and material guarantee and protection of the British Government"—to secure the "independence" as well as the peace and prosperity of his territory (1320. 41).

This was on the 21st of April, 1874, and by the 2nd of May Sir A. Clarke is in the Lingie river, to which he has summoned H.M.S. Avon and Charybdis (1111. 232). Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère? In the first place, Perba had been foolish enough to ask the Governor to recognize him as ruler of Rambau. But Sir A. Clarke, not wishing, he tells us, to be "made a party to an irregular succession," thought he would investigate his title on the spot, and see that it was "legitimate and authentic." Next, this same chief's stockades were "seriously injurious not only to the trade of Malacca but to that of Sungei Ujong." Thirdly, the Klana desired earnestly to have this obstacle to commerce removed. Nay more, Sir A. Clarke believed that Perba himself, who derived an income from the stockades, was willing to abate the nuisance, but was restrained by "evil counsellors," Sumatra men, "who could have no interest in Rambau." Here were many pleas for interposition in the affairs of those little states—a chief's uninvestigated title, his stockades, his neighbour's treaty obligations, the interests of commerce in general, and the man's own secret inclinations. Which was the good one? It is enough to say that Sir A. Clarke decided to intervene. "To exhaust all methods of conciliation," he required Perba to meet him at or near the debateable ground; but the Rambau chief, "though most desirous to see him," was prevented by an indisposition, caught, apparently, from his advisers. Sir Andrew then determined to give Sungei Ujong the "material support" of the men-of-war's boats; and he had no difficulty in making himself master of the obnoxious stockades; for the Malays did not wait for the sailors (1111. 233). When the latter arrived, the stockades were bare. They were destroyed at once; and Sir Andrew Clarke came away, convinced in his own mind that "no one was more glad to hear of their removal" than their owner (1111. 234). Now, this kind of

belief is common among us in the East; but it is singularly perplexing to us at home; for we are driven to the alternative of supposing either that natives really court and delight in receiving our blows and insults, or that English Governors in the East fall into a moral atmosphere which sadly distorts their mental vision.

Three or four months later, the new ally of Great Britain was again in need of her material guarantee and protection. His subject or rival, the Bandar, a man of much more influence in Sungei Ujong than himself, had not only refused to sign that singular document to which the Klana had put his hand and seal, but "had openly expressed his disapproval" of it, and had "even threatened the Klana's life." The latter had asked the Governor for a Resident and a flag. Sir Andrew "foresaw that if we desired to put a final stop to those oppressions and cruelties which had so long disgraced the neighbouring states," a Resident would be indispensable; but he began by giving him a flag only. The piece of bunting was to be hoisted, he tells us, merely "as a compliment to this Government" (1320. 8); but he had misunderstood the Malay's letter, which said that he wanted it so that he might be "under the protection of the Great Governor" (1320. 40). It was to be the symbol of the "independence" which he had secured for his country. Now, when the mast intended for the flag was set up, and a feast was proclaimed, and a buffalo was slaughtered to celebrate the compliment which Sungei Ujong was about to pay to Great Britain, the ungracious Bandar, who had perhaps heard of the alliance of the man and the horse, came and forbade the feast, or at all events the elevation of the mast and the display of the flag. And what is more, the people of the country seemed disposed to side with him. So the Klana again appealed to the Governor. He wanted to have his country made populous, and "a good straight road for traders to come and go on." He wanted, further, a Resident to give him good advice; and lastly, but not least, he wanted the Governor's help "to destroy the Bandar's district" (1320. 40).

The Lieut.-Governor of Malacca thought these demands

reasonable. Things looked serious, and the Lieut.-Governor looked serious too. He "feared the gravest consequences both for Sungei Ujong and for our own subjects there," if the Bandar was to be "thus allowed to assume the chief authority in Sungei Ujong, in the face of the recent engagement" (the bond-like instrument) "with the acknowledged head of the state." And so the Governor "determined to use all available means to avoid a possible issue so disastrous to all order and safety in Sungei Ujong itself, and our own Settlement of Malacca" (1320. 8).

He called on the Sultan of Salangore to espouse the Klana's side. He sent orders by his own envoy to the Chinese subjects of Sungei Ujong, to forbid them to interfere in the dispute; and he warned the Bandar that if he made war against the Klana he would be guilty of making war on the Queen of England (1320. 42). But the Bandar, "considering himself by reason of his position so far from the sea"—this was a "pirate," too!—"safe from the active interference on the part of the British Government;" doubting perhaps also, whether the English Governor had been commissioned to interfere in such disputes, "assumed a tone of insolent indifference" towards the envoy, and not only attacked but beat his sovereign.

It was soon reported that our officer, Mr. Pickering, was in some danger; and an expedition was despatched under the Commissioner of Police of Singapore. With the loss of one English life, the Bandar was put to flight; the Police Superintendent pronounced, without trial, some Chinese, who were suspected of having supported the old chief with supplies, traitors and rebels who had incurred the penalties of death and forfeiture, but he only fined, flogged, or imprisoned them, instead. He established a new tariff of tolls; regulated the leasing of the tin-mines at rents to be fixed by the Resident whom he installed; sold the opium, spirits, and pawnbroking farms on terms which he judged satisfactory, and established or reinstated three licensed gambling-houses. Then, after soundly lecturing the Klana on his past misgovernment, and advising him henceforth to follow the Resi-

dent's counsels in all things; but, above all things, to "do his best to carry out the wishes of the Governor," he returned to the duties of his own office (1320. 46—54).

Here, then, was a remarkable development of Lord Kimberley's simple idea that an English adviser should be given to Malay chiefs who desired such aid. We had arrived at making ourselves the champions of any chief who needed an ally against intestine and foreign enemies, and who was willing to pay for our help by accepting an officer who, under the guise of advising, would assume the government of the country.

IX.

PAHANG AND JOHORE.

An attempt was made a little later to establish our residential system in the State of Pahang. It failed; but the story is worth a moment's notice, as one of the curiosities of intervention in native affairs. The kingdom of Johore was, down to the beginning of the century, governed by Sultans. It then fell to pieces, and the greater part of it was divided between two of the principal officers of the state, the Tumanggong, and the Bandahara. The latter got Pahang, the other became the ruler of the southern extremity of the ancient state under the old name of Johore. A small tract called Mohr, on the confines of Malacca, with a small pension, was secured to the Sultan and his successors by a treaty made in 1855, between the Sultan and the Tumanggong, in the presence, and, as it were, under the auspices of the Governor of Singapore.

In 1862, the succession of Pahang was in dispute between two brothers, Tahir and Ahmat, and Tahir, to obtain the aid of his Johore neighbour, executed, at Singapore, a document purporting to cede a part of the territory of Pahang to Johore. He was beaten by his brother, who on becoming the established ruler of Pahang, repudiated Tahir's cession. The instrument seems to have contained a provision for referring disputes between its signitaries to the British government; and it is curious to notice how this stipulation, to which the British government was no party, directly or indirectly, was understood by our Colonial Governors. Sir A. Clarke describes it as "guaran-

teeing action on the part of our Government;" and Sir H. Ord seems to have regarded it as a kind of perquisite which entitled him to force his arbitration on the parties, *nolentes volentes*. But the Bandahara of Pahang always persistently rejected these good offices or pretensions, partly, indeed, because he holds that the instrument, executed by his brother, is not binding on him, but partly also because he thinks that the proposed arbitrators are too much in his enemy's camp.

The present Tumanggong of Johore, or Maharajah, as he has been called for the last few years, is the son of that chief who, it has been already mentioned, found a wise adviser in an English merchant. He is something out of the ordinary run of Malay chiefs, and in some respects superior to them. He has much of the veneer of civilization. He speaks English a little, and has adopted some European habits, while wisely avoiding others. He lives chiefly in Singapore, and is a favourite with our Governors and other officials—deservedly so in one sense, for he is always *aux petits soins* with them. Like all the other native chiefs of the Peninsula, he naturally desires to secure an ally in us; and to attain this end he spares no pains to ingratiate himself with all who can be useful for his purpose. This is no doubt excellent policy on his part, but a little more reserve would be desirable on ours. We might take a lesson in this respect from the Governors and Residents of the adjoining Dutch Colonies, who manage to conduct their intercourse with their native princes and chiefs with far more real consideration for them, but at the same time without lapsing for a moment into intimacy. The Johore chief is said to have discovered that with his English neighbours it is the festive board which best

"Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros."

Absurd importance is given to the fact that he is frequently the host or guest of governors and other officials; but if his hospitalities have not that tendency which is imputed to them, they have led to narrower intimacies than are desirable;

and at all events they have unquestionably created a general impression among the natives, that the chief has great influence with the colonial officials who habitually condescend to them. And Colonial Ministers do not dispel this impression when they single out for the English dignities of Knight of the Star of India and Grand Cross of St. George, a ruler who, as Sir W. Jervois truly points out, does not stand preeminent among Malay rulers, either in point of family or rank or hereditary right (1709. 53), or, it is said by men of local experience, in the popular estimation of his countrymen.

The Bandahara of Pahang shares these common impressions, and whenever Johore's English ally has proposed to act as arbitrator (Sir H. Ord says that the Maharajah repeatedly made complaints to him about trifling acts of aggression by Pahang, 1320. 3), the Bandahara has declined the offer and repudiated the attempted award. In 1869 Sir H. Ord asserted the right of adjudicating on the boundary or cession question.

In October, 1874, it was Sir A. Clarke's turn to be set in motion by the Johore chief. An employé of his was killed somewhere on the debateable ground, and he hastened to assure the Governor that he was "apprehensive that this was only a recommencement of the difficulties" between himself and his neighbour. The Governor was further informed not only that the murder was to be ascribed to political causes (1111. 243), but that the Pahang people had invaded and were in actual occupation of the soil of Johore, and were committing great atrocities there (Id. 248). Now here arose two questions: Was the story true? and if it was, Did it concern us? Sir A. Clarke, new to the East, accepted the story as true, at once; and as to England's duty to interfere, he held that the treaty of 1862 between two Malays, besides "guaranteeing the action of England," had been "ratified by the award of Sir H. Ord in 1869," and that it had made the territory in dispute "for all time sacred, and the property of the Maharajah" (Id.).

Strong in these views, he found in them and in the Johorean tale of terror, sufficient grounds for requesting the

co-operation of the senior naval officer; and he set off for Pahang in the Charybdis, accompanied by the Avon and the Hart, which were reinforced by "his highness the Maharajah's gunboat Pular, and a steam launch also belonging to his highness" (1111. 243).

Now, this Malay contingent was not needed for the better protection of the Governor, nor was it calculated to impress the men of Pahang with a sense of his impartiality. The native ruler showed at first no eagerness to welcome his visitor. He may have heard, indeed, that Mr. Read, an English merchant long resident in the Straits, and who always took a friendly interest in Pahang, accompanied the Governor; but he would learn, at the same time, that another of the Governor's fellow-passengers was Mr. Braddell, the colonial Attorney-General, who had for many years been also the retained legal adviser of the Maharajah of Johore;[1] and he might be excused for shrinking from the "mediation" or "arbitration" of a Governor who was advised by his enemy's adviser, as well as escorted by his enemy's vessels.

However, Mr. Read allayed his fears, and "commissioners" were appointed to inquire into the alleged murder and other outrages. It was soon ascertained that the whole tale of invasion and atrocity was a fiction, and that the death of the Johore man, if a murder at all, was unconnected with the feuds of Johore and Pahang, and the sacred treaty between the former and the fugitive brother of the latter.

Sir A. Clarke had had another reason for visiting Pahang. He had received what purported to be an embassy from the

[1] When it became publicly known that Mr. Braddell was in receipt of this salary of $1000, and of another of like amount from the opium farmer, the propriety of his receiving them was disputed in the Legislative Council; but it was defended by Sir. H. Ord. Lord Carnarvon, however, did not view the matter with equal favour, and the salaries were given up. The Attorney-General, however, seems to have been regarded as having something more than a vested interest in them, for his official salary was raised by 500*l.* when he was required to give up the 400*l.* which were objected to. But he was an Englishman, not a Malay.

Pahang chief, "soliciting his advice in opening up his country, and administering its government" (243). But notwithstanding the fair speeches of the "embassy," the Bandahara seems to have been altogether silent on those interesting subjects. Had he learned in the interval how "advice" and "administration" were apt to get blended in English official minds? or was the embassy, like the Johore story of invasion and atrocity, but another weak invention, got up to stimulate the Governor to action? Sir W. Jervois suspects that it was a sheer imposture, and that the Bandahara of Pahang had no knowledge whatever of it (1505. 9). For, in the following year (August 1875), Sir William visited this chief, to "explain the advantages which would be derived from a good system of taxation and collection of revenues," and placed himself at his disposal, "to assist him with advice, and to instruct him as to the best mode of opening up the resources of his state" (1505. 9). But he found that the Bandahara, so far from recognizing in the Governor's suggestions the echo of his own message to Sir A. Clarke, and gladly closing with the offer, manifestly feared his British friend even while offering the rich gifts of his counsels. He seemed to Sir William not to understand his proposals till after much explanation; and then he could give no opinion upon them until he consulted his chief. His manner, it is true, "warmed very much towards the close of the interview," as would the manner of anybody who had an interview with so agreeable a visitor; but Sir W. Jervois left Johore the reverse of sanguine that Pahang would be added to the list of Malay candidates for "British assistance and advice" (1505. 9). No wonder; the Malays had no doubt by this time heard the fame, and learned the meaning of "the British Residential system," and Pahang was wise enough to avoid it.

The distrust created by the personal relations of the native chief of Johore with our officials is not confined to his countrymen. To judge from the tone of the Straits newspapers for some months past, it prevails among our own,

and has been intensified by a recent event. The Sultan of the old dynasty of Johore died last June, and when his eldest son, Allum, announced his succession to his father's title and to the last scrap of the kingdom which remained to the family, the officer who was temporarily administering the colony thought proper to reply, in terms which might have been more courteous, that the British Government refused to recognize him. What concern had the British Government in the matter? and where did the administrator find his authority for pledging England to the recognition or non-recognition of a Malay chief? The Maharajah of Johore had an interest in the matter, and the course pursued by the colonial authorities seems to have been entirely in harmony with that interest. The Johore chief entered and took possession of Mohr, ostensibly as the guardian of an infant son of the Sultan, to whom the latter had purported to leave his title and principality by will. He is said also to have taken measures with *les mal-pensants* of Mohr, which excited no little indignation among the English residents in the colony. Why was it not possible for our officials to leave those Malays alone? The Maharajah and the English administrator appear simultaneously on the scene; and the British flag certainly seemed there more for the service of the former than to protect any British interests.

It is said, apparently on good authority, that when Lord Carnarvon was apprised of these doings, he directed that the Malays should be left to settle the question in their own way, without the interference of the colonial authorities. But if the local newspapers are to be credited, this injunction was construed as a direction that the Malays of Mohr should be ordered to proceed to the election of a sovereign. And so, certain chiefs nominated by the Governor are summoned to assemble in their comitia. Once more the inevitable English official arrives on the spot to preside over the electoral urns, to take and reject votes, and to smile benignly on the cause and electoral practices of our favoured ally. All this was very well meant no doubt; but it is to be feared that the Malays have not put a favourable

interpretation on the interest in the Mohr election displayed by English officials. Is it necessary to add that the Maharajah is triumphantly returned as Sultan; and that Allum and his little brother, if either of them found a proposer and seconder, are nowhere on the poll? Such is the latest phase of British intervention in native affairs.

It is impossible to shut one's eyes to the comic side of such performances, but they have also a serious aspect. Nothing can be more explicit than the language of the Treaty of 1855, by which the father of the Maharajah, for himself and his successors, abandoned all claim to the territory in question, and agreed that it should be enjoyed in full sovereignty by the late Sultan, his heirs and successors. Although our Government was no party to the instrument, it took active steps to bring about the arrangement; and it was thought that additional solemnity was given to it by its being signed in the presence of the English Governor. This circumstance, undoubtedly, would not justify us in insisting on its provisions being respected; but it should at least have operated to check all disposition to take part in, or countenance a breach or disregard of them. If England ought ever to interfere with those people when her own interests are not concerned, surely it ought to be for some worthy cause, such as the observance of treaties, or the support of right against superior force, or even the sentiment of respect or loyalty for an old dynasty. Any rational or decent interference in this case should have taken the shape of a warning to the Johore chief, that England would look with no favourable eye on his infraction of the engagement to respect the rights of the Sultan's family. But when we see English officials figuring in such scenes, and actually abetting a breach of treaty to deprive a Malay chief of his humble inheritance, it is time to turn away from the sight, before we find words to express the feelings which they excite.

X.

NEW PLAN FOR PERAK.

We have seen what the Residential system was which Sir A. Clarke planted and left in the Malay peninsula. When he withdrew from the Straits of Malacca, only a little more than a year later, his successor, Sir W. Jervois, found, on his arrival, that each Resident was practically administering the government of the State to which he was accredited (1512. 7, &c.). To go back upon the past, and examine the policy or justice of the *fait accompli*, was no part of his duty. The machine was working without noise everywhere except in Perak. There it was creaking and out of gear; for in June Mr. Birch was still unable to get from Abdullah his signature to the orders which he required for conducting the government of the country, and he threatened the Sultan with dethronement if he did not yield. The only question for the new Governor was, how the new system should be made to work without jar. Assuming that everything done in his predecessor's time had the seal of the Minister's sanction, he was naturally less scandalized by the net which had been laid for the Malay's feet, according to the later interpretation of the Perak treaty, than by the faithlessness of the Malay who struggled to extricate himself from the toils. That Punic Sultan seemed to him to be always "breaking his engagements;" signally so, when he had refused his signature simply "to vest in the Resident the necessary powers for carrying into effect the schemes which he had matured for the improvement of the country" (1505. 32). It was only by threats of dethronement (and, it might have been added, by stopping the supplies), that his adviser had

been able to extort from him, on a few rare occasions, the acceptance of his advice. Then, he was personally a wretched creature. He was surrounded with "bad advisers," men of "the worst character;" and he lived in a not less vicious circle of "an exceedingly immoral collection of women" of strong designations. He was extragavant, he smoked opium (instead of drinking brandy and water), and in lieu of the ordinary qualifications of a ruler, he had only "imbecility, weakness, and duplicity" (Id.) On these grounds Sir W. Jervois conceived that we were abundantly justified in dethroning this "head of an independent state," as he is styled down to a much later period (1709. 67).

But another matter pressed on the Governor's mind. He was beset with the extraordinary idea that these Malays were a formidable people. The safety of our colony seemed to him to depend on their being kept in order and subjection. They were fanatical and intolerant, especially after fasting between sunrise and sunset for a month (1505. 160, 194); and he fancied that a squabble among them in the depths of their forests was not only an evil example, but positively a peril to our Settlements. Finally, he had brought himself to find such a degree of tenacity in our engagement to "advise" them, that even a formal release would hardly have restored us our freedom. He, too, like his predecessor, seems to have believed in a divine mission to improve the Malays in the management of their affairs in spite of themselves. He considered that the interests of civilization and the safety of our possessions bound us "to release them from their anarchy and confusion;" and that, if we withdrew from the task, we should be guilty of injustice and vacillation—at all events, until we had conducted them to those "just and enlightened principles of government" in which the Maharajah of Johore administered his principality! (1512. 16.)

Of these views it is enough to say that the colony had withstood the shocks of Malay feuds for the best part of a century not only without injury, but generally without even consciousness of them. The religious fanaticism of the Malays consists in looking upon a Chinaman who eats pig

and other unclean things, with much the same feelings as an Englishman regards a fellow-mortal who neglects the tub. As to their power of injuring us or our colony by hostilities, these are as probable, and would be as formidable, as an invasion of the monkeys who people their jungles.

Sir W. Jervois, it is seen, had found as many and as good reasons for taking their country from those Perak Malays, as Sir A. Clarke had for making war on the foes of Sungei Ujong. The Pangkor engagement was to be strictly enforced according to its latest and sharpest interpretation; and two ways occurred to the Governor for "loyally carrying it out" (1512. 16).

The first was the pure and simple one of "declaring Perak British territory and governing it accordingly." But further reflection, and probably indifferent advice, modified this plan. Was it too palpably unjust and harsh? By no means; annexation would be much too good for the Malays; for it would hamper that abundant elbow-room for vigorous measures which their reformers needed. "In carrying on the government of the State at present," Sir W. Jervois observed, "it would be very inconvenient if the inhabitants of Perak became entitled to the rights and privileges of British subjects." How so? The only rights and privileges which they would acquire were those which their countrymen found in the adjoining colony—that protection which English law gives to the person and property of the meanest against the illegal acts of the highest. "On the other hand," the Governor continued, "by ruling in the name of the Sultan, the form of government will be more adapted to the conditions of the case, and will enable us to deal easily with matters that might be difficult of solution under English law. For instance, it will be much easier to deal with chiefs who may oppose the new order of things" (1505. 36). In other words, an English governor would find it more handy to deal with them and their rights on the summary principles of the orderly room, if he had all the absolute powers of an Oriental despot, than if he was trammelled by that respect for justice and consideration for human rights which his own national

law exacts. This middle course he also recommended on the ground that it would be less costly than plain annexation; and that if it failed, it might be abandoned, and the government be gradually relinquished to native rulers, if any should prove fit for it. It is right to add that Sir W. Jervois, a little later, reverted to simple and complete annexation (163).

The Governor's plan, in short, was to substitute for one Resident two Commissioners, who should do avowedly what the Resident had been doing under the name of "advising;" that is, wield the powers of the ruler. In other words, it was simply, *mutato nomine*, Mr. Birch's plan of January, 1875 (sup. p. 25).

It only remained to carry it into execution. In July and August, the Resident had made some abortive efforts to get Ismail to surrender the government to him on the condition of being recognized as the Sultan. And here we come upon another practice in our international law, by which a treaty is recognized as binding only on the weaker of the two parties. Abdullah had been thrust on the country by us; but we were now ready to throw him aside and take up Ismail, whom we had deposed, or anybody else who answered our purpose of acquiring Perak.

Sir W. Jervois was aware that his powers gave him no authority to carry out such a scheme; but he was also aware that his predecessor had approved of it in substance, and also that the repeated admissions, if they ought not rather to be called boasts, of the latter, of having acted beyond his legal powers, and in excess of his instructions (ex. gr. 1111-72, 73, 86), had met with no grave looks, but on the contrary with warm approval at home. It was natural, therefore, that he should desire to emulate him in the same line. He may even have suspected that the Colonial Office was better pleased with a bold governor who took the initiative, than with a prudent one who waited for instructions. The latter throws the responsibility on head-quarters, while the former assumes it on himself. If he succeeds, the Minister shares his success and is satisfied; if he fails, the Minister is not bound to pick up the stumbler, or to stand over his body

against all comers. Sir W. Jervois determined to take the bolder part.

Proceeding to Perak, in Sept. 1875, the Governor proposed, first to Ismail and then to Abdullah, to sign letters which had been already prepared for them, requesting that the government should be handed over to the Governor of the Straits Settlements "as her Majesty's representative" (Précis 8). Ismail, with the usual mixture of courtesy and timidity of a Malay, received the proposal "apparently with pleasure;" but he said that he must consult his advisers. After a few days the old chief declined the proposal, claiming to take his stand upon those treaties which, he said, had long subsisted between Perak and the East India Company (1505. 46).

The Governor then addressed himself to Abdullah. Him he reminded of his alleged breaches of engagement; of his disregard of the minatory warning of Lord Carnarvon, which will be presently mentioned (p. 69); of his thwarting the Resident; of the terrible debt slavery; and in short, of the sixes and sevens to which the affairs of Perak were brought—of course through his misconduct, and not by our interference. And he announced that England did not intend to allow them to continue in that condition. Abdullah was contrite, of course; but he postponed his reply until he should hear what his rival and chiefs thought of the English scheme.

A third pretender was also sought out. This was Yusuf, who had been twice passed over for the Sultanate on account of his odious character. He was heartily detested by his countrymen (1709. 54); but he had, Sir W. Jervois tells us, since the day when he first saw the Governor in Sept. 1875, "avowed his trust and friendship for the British Government" (Id.). The way in which he was led to this avowal comes out later in the précis of evidence. He seems to have been much with the Resident, occasionally instigating him to "make examples" of chiefs, and "to burn a village or two" (Précis 24); and upon the Governor's visit to Perak, the Resident got him to sign a letter which he had prepared for him, requesting the Governor to take possession of Perak. For

this service, which does so much honour to him, he was promised an annuity of $12,000 (1709. 99).

Abdullah's deliberations were quickened by a simple expedient. The Resident was furnished with two letters written by the Governor, one addressed to Abdullah, which, after recapitulating the old grievances, offered to leave him his title and to give him "a large allowance" if he would make over the government to British officers; otherwise "he would be no longer Sultan." The other was an offer of the Sultanate to Yusuf, but it was really intended for Abdullah's eye only.

The latter was allowed to get a glimpse of it by an act of simulated treachery on the part of his friend, the Resident (1709. 99); and it answered its purpose. Abdullah could not consent to be supplanted, and so he at once signed a letter which the Resident had ready for him, together with a couple of proclamations from the same mint, announcing to his subjects that the government of Perak had passed into the hands of the British authorities, whose officers would govern in his name.

XI.

THE RESIDENT'S DEATH.

A MONTH later, on the 1st of November, 1875, Mr. Birch proceeded to the village of Passir Sala, to post up the orders and proclamations announcing that the whole kingdom of Perak was henceforth to be governed by English officers. What was the nature and purpose of the proposed act? The village was in that part of Perak which had *de facto* remained under the rule of Ismail; it was not subject to Abdullah or to England. The proposed act, then, was a symbolical taking possession of the government of the village; but this was an act of hostility which its actual rulers had a right, and the village chief was bound, to repel. The transaction, it may be added, was one into which the Governor had no authority to enter, and which was repudiated by the Colonial Minister.

The chief of the village, Maharajah Lela, was a subject and one of the most prominent supporters of Ismail. He was evidently a man of more than ordinary spirit and resolution among the Perak Malays. He had often declared that if Mr. Birch came to take his village or interfere with him, he would resist him (Précis 24), and he had long before made a stockade round his house. All this accounted for the rumours of impending disturbance which were in the air when the Resident was preparing for his expedition (Précis 26). The latter evidently expected to encounter resistance, for he set off on his expedition with three boats, one of them carrying a brass gun, with a guard of about a dozen Sepoys; and he was heard to observe, as he started,

that if Lela wished to fight, he, the Resident, would fire into him (Id.).

He arrived at Passir Sala at 10 or 11 p.m., and moored his boat near a floating bath-house, a few yards from the shop of a Chinese tradesman. Lela saw him and shook hands with him (1505. 83). He slept on board that night. It is said that messengers were sent before daybreak to summon the men of the neighbourhood, and that upwards of 100 armed men assembled (Précis 27). Be this as it may, the village was early on foot.

It was the first day of the month which follows the Ramazan, or month of fasting of the Mahometans, a day always kept as a great festival by them. Twenty or thirty Malays, armed, as usual, with spear and kris—for men always go armed with these weapons in Malay countries—lounged on the river bank, looking at the Resident's boats and crews. There was evidently nothing about them or in the surrounding scene to excite apprehension, for Mr. Abbott, a naval officer who accompanied the Resident, took his gun and crossed over to Campong Gaja to shoot snipe. Mr. Birch, too, was up and stirring before 6 a.m. It is related—the story comes from a native source—that on landing for a moment from his boat, he put his hand gently on a young girl of some ten years of age, who was standing on the river side, and said something about her beauty; and that her father, misinterpreting the innocent act, clutched his kris, intending to rush on the Resident, but was held back and pacified by the bystanders. The Sepoys and boats' crews landed to cook their morning meal on the bank of the river. Mr. Birch kept but one man near him, a sentry armed with a revolver, as he prepared for his morning bath.

He had already despatched his interpreter, Arshad, to Lela, whose house was about 200 yards off; and this man announced to the chief that the Resident had come to the village to post the proclamations. Lela answered that he had no orders from his sovereign, and that until he received them, he would not allow the papers to be posted. Arshad

then requested him to see Mr. Birch. He refused; the interpreter withdrew, and Lela directed some of his men to follow him, and, if he attempted to put up the proclamations, "to fight," that is, obviously, to use force to carry out his orders. Arshad reported the result of his interview to the Resident, who ordered him at once to post up a proclamation on the Chinaman's house. One of Lela's men told the interpreter not to do so, and being unheeded, he tore it down as soon as it was put up. The interpreter called out what had happened to Mr. Birch, who was in the bath-house close by, and the latter directed him to post up another. This again was immediately torn down; the interpreter thereupon struck the offender, who instantly drew his kris and stabbed him. The wounded man reeled towards the river; and at the sight of blood, Lela's men and the bystanders, raising the cry of "amok" (murder), rushed to the bath-house. In another moment the unhappy Resident was despatched with their spears, swords, and krises. The Sepoys hurried to their boats and fired a volley or two on the Malays, killing and wounding several (1505. 155). The fire was not returned.

XII.

THE PERAK WAR.

This tragedy was soon followed by the loss of another English life. When the news reached Pinang, Capt. Innes, an Engineer officer of great promise, was sent with a few men to Perak, to act as one of Sir W. Jervois' new Commissioners, and with instructions to inquire into the attack on the Resident, and to secure the persons of all who had been concerned in it (1505. 88).

On the 7th of November, he proceeded to attack Lela's village. That chief's stockade was well concealed by underwood and Indian corn, which is described as standing eight or ten feet high. Innes' force consisted of thirty English soldiers and sailors, as many Malay scouts, half as many more Sikhs, and a score of native policemen. He took no gun with him, and the rockets with which he was supplied proved useless, as they were of a kind with which his men were not familiar. The force approached the stockade through the Indian corn which shrouded it from view; and when the Malays who defended it fired upon them, those of our men who were in front were exposed to the return fire of the men behind them. The Sikhs, raw recruits, refused to advance, notwithstanding the exertions of their officer, who did not know a word of their language; and as to the policemen, they were from the first nowhere to be seen. Poor Innes lost his life; Corporal Fay, a Malay scout, and a Sikh were also killed; Captain Booth and Mr. Elliott and several men were wounded. It was found necessary to retire (1505. 89).

And now people fairly lost their heads. With the news of this reverse a season of panic set in. Rumours of a great Mahometan "revival," and of a general rising of all the Malay Peninsula arose in the Colony, and spread like wildfire to this country, where we were told that the ferocious and fanatical Malays were about to kindle a religious war against hated foreigners, traders and Christians. On the 9th of November, Sergeant-major Mustansah, of the Pinang police, reports that the two Sultans of Perak and the redoubtable chief of Passir Sala have formed a league against Great Britain, and are at the head of an army of 10,000 men, with a commissariat already organized, and served by elephants (1505, 109). Col. Anson, Lieut.-Governor of Pinang, solemnly refers the terrifying report, in due official routine, to the Superintendent of Police; who considers it "reliable." Two days later, Mustansah brings confirmation of his earlier news, in another report, to the effect that Ismail alone had about 7000 "picked" men, and that "seven stockades had been erected at each of the turnings of the Perak river, around which are planted Indian corn and plantain-trees to obstruct views from the river." Further, the Mantri and the Chinese Captain, Ah Kwi Kai, "though both heavily in debt," have, according to the sergeant-major, an army, the former of about 600 or 700 men, the latter of 7000 or 8000.

It is probable that Mustansah had not the monopoly of this kind of news; and that tales vying in absurdity with his found circulation and credit in the Colony. Sir. W. Jervois seems to have been not altogether uninfluenced by them. He had been but a few months in the East; and the readiness which he found in men of longer local experience to believe them, must naturally have affected his own views. Our officials had sown the dragon's teeth, and now in fancy they saw a crop of warriors springing up from the earth in array against us. Where else could they possibly come from? Certain it is that the acting Colonial Secretary, in Sir William Jervois' absence from Singapore, telegraphed to Calcutta the news of the failure of the attack on the village, and his own belief that the affair was "most serious,"

and that "a movement in the Peninsula was widely extended and long planned" (1505. 148). Even as late as the 22nd of November, a week after all resistance had ceased, alarming telegrams arrived at the Colonial Office, from the same quarter, telling of the danger of a "national rising" as the cause for demanding troops, and asserting that subsequent information strengthened the belief in that danger (1505. 27). It does not seem to have occurred to the recipients of these messages to ask for a little of that confirmatory information. Sir William Jervois afterwards, concurring in these views of his subordinate (198), telegraphed to India for 1500 men (reduced afterwards to 1200) besides a mountain battery, and four engineer officers, and fifty, or better still, a hundred miles of field telegraph, and a million rounds of Snider ammunition. He also applied to Hong Kong for 300 men.

Meanwhile, Abdul Karim, the owner of the Salamah mines, offered him 800 "good fighting men," asking only in return a hundred muskets and an understanding on the subject of "loot." (146). The Maharajah of Johore, faithful ally to Great Britain in the day of trouble, "showed himself anxious to support the proceedings of the British Government" (Id. 123), but we hear nothing of the mobilization of the Johorean armies. Finally, the Governor of Saigon was but too happy to show his courtesy and consideration by placing the French man-of-war, D'Assas, at the disposal of Great Britain (1505. 82). But happily, even Mustansah and company had not been gifted with powers brilliant enough to improvise a Malay Armada; and the British navy sufficed for our needs. The Fly and the Thistle were already on the spot; the Modeste and Philomel were not far off; the Ringdove was following, and the Egeria was "looming in the distance."

And now up came the Buffs and the Blue-jackets; the Goorkhas and the artillery; and the Hong Kong troops and the Madras sappers and miners, all fresh from Rangoon. The electric wire, let us hope, was to the fore, and the engineers were surely not left behind. Everything seemed complete; and yet there was a want—an uncommon want. Where was the enemy? Where were the 10,000 or 15,000 men of

the Pinang Sergeant-major? Where were there 1000, or even 500 Malays in arms? And the Perak echoes answered, Where indeed? Not more than thirty or forty armed Malays were ever seen at any one time; the whole number in arms in Perak throughout the so-called campaign, did not probably exceed three hundred men.

The plain truth is, that before the troops sent for had arrived, the fighting, such as it was, was over. The Superintendent of the Singapore Police had been despatched to Perak, and with some 230 English soldiers and sailors, and fifty Sikhs under his command, Passir Sala was again attacked on the 15th of November (1505. 128, &c.). The enemy, he tells us, made "an obstinate and prolonged resistance" to this "combined land and water attack;" but "after a long day's fighting" we overcame their obstinate resistance. If the enemy "obstinately returned our fire," our fire nevertheless succeeded in driving him from his defences. Whenever our advanced guard carried a stockade "with a rush," they found that the rush was a waste of breath, as the stockade was sure to be empty. The result of this long day's operations was that we took four stockades and five guns; and happily for humanity, the enemy's return fire was as bloodless as it was obstinate. We did not receive a scratch during the whole series of the day's operations. Two casualties indeed are recorded; Mr. Cope was accidentally shot in the arm by one of our own men; and Ladjis, a Singapore policeman, received a slight spear wound from a Malay, as he was sharing in the poor pleasure which his superiors were giving themselves, of burning the houses in Passir Sala and Campong Gaja, including that of the Chinaman, on whose wall the proclamation had been posted. That poor man saw his house and furniture burnt by the order of some young (let us hope very young) man in the Colonial Service, because he had not summoned courage and presence of mind enough to rush in and rescue the unfortunate Resident from the infuriated Malay mob; in other words, to share his fate (*Times* Correspondence). The loss of the enemy was not likely to be heavy; for

Malays do not remain long in a stockade after a shell or a rocket has dropped into it. They left no killed or wounded behind them, and none of them waited to be taken prisoners. Some traces of blood were noticed in one stockade; and it was hoped that a burst gun which was also found, had not exploded without doing some damage.

After this victory, Sir W. Jervois deemed it desirable to suspend operations for a while, in order to open a correspondence with Ismail, and probably to give to any chiefs who might be disposed to resistance, time for reflection in the presence of the overwhelming force now in their country. He naturally desired to distinguish friend from foe; and both he and the officers of the expeditionary force which now arrived on the scene, showed a creditable anxiety to protect the unresisting people from violence. But the difficulty was really not so much in distinguishing between friend and foe, as in finding any foe. After Maharajah Lela had been driven out of his village by a few rockets and rounds of case-shot, he was heard of no more during the rest of the so-called war, and nobody seemed to be disposed to stand up to be shot at in his place.

But where was Ismail, and what did he mean by not sending either his submission or a declaration of war? As early as the 12th of November, the Lieutenant-Governor of Pinang had challenged him, if he had nothing to do with the murder, to prove this negative at once, and to immediately inform the British Government who were "the chiefs and other persons" who had been guilty of it, and guilty, too, of the subsequent attack on the British force which had been "sent to inquire" into the matter (1505. 110). Sir W. Jervois now (November 22) wrote to the Malay, to know whether he was a friend or an enemy, expressing at the same time much surprise at not having received from him a disapproval of the murder (Id. 138, 140). Ismail answered that he knew nothing of the crime until days after it had been committed; that he and his countrymen were starving, owing to our blockade of their river; and that the country would be ruined if our soldiers came into it

(Id. 183). Major McNair was ordered to see him; but Ismail would consent to an interview only on the condition that that officer would send him some "rice and salt, which would be sufficient for his food and for that of his boatmen, who refused to leave their families without food" (179, 187). All this seemed to Sir W. Jervois very unsatisfactory. It occurred to him that the Malay Sultan was following the same tortuous policy as the King of Ashantee had attempted, to prevent the advance of our troops; and he gradually came to the conviction that under Ismail's subservient style of letter-writing there lay some hidden meaning (180).

The troops then advanced towards Ismail's part of Perak, and the terrified old man took to his heels. With some 140 or 150 men, women, and children, and 27 elephants, he fled from his abode at Blanja, which is on the Perak river, and struck north-east to a place called Kinta, fourteen miles off.

The great object of the war now was to intercept this enemy. One English general was in the north of Perak, another in the south; Blanja and Kinta were nearly equidistant from both. A combined movement might possibly have been managed to circumvent him, but the simpler course of a stern chase was adopted; and after a toilsome march of three days, the distance between Blanja and Kinta was accomplished by one of the two bodies. Kinta was reached by a force of 300 men and artillery who were, in the official language, "engaged," and it was "captured" at once;—that is, it was peacefully entered, for it was found, like Blanja, deserted (246). Ismail, his women and elephants included, had been too fleet for us. Some musket-shots were fired, in one or two places, at our men, during the march; and the Colonial Surgeon, Dr. Randall, received one in the leg; but this was the only hurt sustained by the expedition. Something was said of stockades and "preparations for obstruction" found on the road (245); but the obstructions were a few trees felled across the path, and there is some reason to believe that an inexperienced eye may mistake the ditches and banks which the Malays make to keep buffaloes out of their fields, for stockades (1505. 155).

XIII.

THE NINE-STATES WAR.

This concluded the war in Perak; and never, probably, had a couple of thousand men found an easier or more bloodless campaign. Salangore had been at about the same time showing signs of disturbance from the chronic discord which we were maintaining there, but Mr. Davidson had, by a little quiet firmness and by taking time by the forelock, extinguished the spark before it grew into a fire. With only 120 Malay policemen, Malacca men, scattered in various parts of the country, without any Sepoy body-guard, he had not only maintained peace, but had even offered to enter Perak with some fifty of his police to deal with Ismail.

About the same time as the Perak disturbance, however, an occurrence in the little Nine-States confederation near Malacca, a hundred and fifty miles to the south, offered an occasion for giving a little further employment to some part of our forces. The Klana of Sungei Ujong, who had paid the English flag the compliment of placing his fortunes under it, was looked upon with an evil eye by his brother chiefs. Sir W. Jervois thinks it was all jealousy at the increasing prosperity of his State since the Singapore Police Commissioner had put its affairs to rights; but it is allowable to suspect that it was his bringing the English among them that was the real cause of the ill-feeling towards him. At all events, when they were about to elect a head for the whole confederation, a "yang tuan besar" ("who is supreme lord"), they deposed the degenerate Klana, and elected "a worthless

character" in his place. Once more the question arises, What concern was this of ours? But the answer seems to be that we were wedded, for better for worse, to the fortunes of this much troubled Malay chief. His deposition was considered an act of hostility and an insult to the "British Government;" and the election of the supreme ruler, in which the "worthless character" took a part, was declared invalid by the Colonial Governor (1505. 193, 4). Though he had "the better title," had he not attacked the Klana, and written "insolently" to the Resident? (1512. 87).

Early in December, Captain Murray, the Klana's Resident, was informed that the new supreme ruler, Antar, had superseded the chief of the village of Tirachi; and as this place belonged to Sungei Ujong, he deemed it his duty, as Resident, to set off for that place with twenty English soldiers and thirty native policemen, to reconnoitre and inquire (197). Getting no information, he started the next morning, to retrace his steps with his escort, when he learned, from the signs of some Malays, that Mr. Daly, a surveyor, who had accompanied him on the expedition and had left him to carry on some surveying in the neighbouring state of Sri Menanti, was in trouble. The Resident turned back and found Mr. Daly with his police escort in the middle of a padi field, unhurt indeed, but decidedly obstructed by a number of countrymen, who objected to their crops being trodden down, and also to any survey of their fields without the permission of their chief. Those who remember the effect which the sight of a theodolite and a chain had on our farmers in the early days of railway-making, will perhaps be able to make some allowance for the feelings of the Malays at the sight of Mr. Daly's cabalistic performances.

Our men advanced, we are told, on "the enemy." A fight ensued, and we retreated. The news spread among the Malays, and 200 or 300 of them, Sri Menanti men, with perhaps some from the adjoining districts of Jompole and Datu Moar, gathered at Paroa, a place in Sungei Ujong. Reinforced by a few soldiers and police from Malacca, the Resident attacked them there; but again fortune turned her

back on him. The police could not be induced to fire steadily; reports came in that the enemy was outflanking them, the usual scare of undisciplined men; and finally, the ammunition was said to be failing. So the British forces were again compelled to retire. Two days later, however, the tables were turned by the arrival of a new ally, whose services we had secured. A Mr. Fontaine, who seems to have been employed at one time by the Malays in Salangore, now appeared on the scene in our service, with a body of so-called Arabs, fresh from Singapore. It consisted of some eighty or ninety Orientals of various nationalities, described as mostly jailbirds and deserters from ships, who had been picked up in the streets of Singapore, and whom it was thought advisable to employ for this service, while we had 2000 men in the Straits. The combined English and Arab forces renewed the attack on Paroa, and they shared the easy task of taking and burning it, besides shooting a number of Malays.

This wretched business, however, was not to end here. A body of English troops was sent into Sri Menanti, accompanied by that first necessity of a modern army, a special correspondent, who had the merit of supplying more graphic details to the world than the official papers. The country was lovely, highly cultivated, with numerous plantations of fruit-trees, and studded all over with detached houses. But the houses were all deserted; no resistance was offered anywhere. If any fugitive Malays appeared in the distance, the gun and rocket party took long shots at them. Our soldiers plundered what little they could find, and Fontaine's Arabs burnt, along the line of march, what was readily combustible. Then the conquering host was joined by the Lieut.-Governor of Pinang; and the Brito-Arab torch was carried still further into the remote little hamlets of Jompole. Surely the fruits of "intervention in native affairs" were hardly less bitter for ourselves than for the wretched natives.

XIV.

THE VIEWS OF THE COLONIAL MINISTER BEFORE THE CATASTROPHE.

It is now time to inquire what the Colonial Minister thought of all these proceedings. His first notice of the Pangkor transaction was early in March, 1874, when he expressed a hope that it had not "unduly" compromised us in the internal affairs of a Malay State (1111. 88), postponing "the full consideration of the various questions raised before him" until the receipt of fuller despatches. These arrived on the 30th of the same month; but the questions were not then considered. The next time that the subject was noticed was on the 29th of May in the same year, and then, apparently, because Lord Stanley of Alderley had contended, a few days before, in the House of Lords, that Sir A. Clarke was involving the country in a policy of annexation. "The question of our dealings with the Malay chiefs," said the Colonial Minister, "having been brought before the House of Lords on the 19th inst. by Lord Stanley of Alderley, and commented upon by him in terms reflecting on your conduct, I think it desirable that I should no longer delay referring to those despatches, so far as to make known to you the view I at present take of the measures which you have adopted for the pacification of the country, and the repression of piracy." Lord Carnarvon then proceeded to assure Sir A. Clarke of the admiration which the Government felt for his ability and energy in dealing with affairs "so complicated and difficult." But again he declined "to consider in detail the several provisions of the important engagement with the chiefs of

Perak" (1111. 231). In the following September, he returned for a third time to this engagement; but only to say, while giving it his general approval, that he did not propose to offer any detailed criticism on it (242). The further consideration of the subject, it is to be feared, was relegated to the Greek Kalends. And this was unfortunate. The approbation which Sir A. Clarke received would have carried greater weight if it had appeared to be the result of a full examination of his work; but the omission of such an examination is to be regretted still more because there is much reason to believe that the Governor was led to misinterpret the Minister's real view of the treaty, as stated at a later date.

For, in the last mentioned despatch, Lord Carnarvon instructed him to warn the Malays that they would be kept to "the exact fulfilment of the pledges" which they had given (1111. 242). Now, this "exact fulfilment" sounded ominously like a strict literal interpretation of the engagement to "act on" the advice of the Resident, no matter what that advice might be. The declaration was worse than useless; for while not needed for the Malays, whom it was only calculated to alarm, there is reason to fear that it encouraged the Governor in those later views of the Residential system which remained so long altogether unnoticed by the Minister. When Mr. Birch was despatched to Perak shortly after the receipt of Lord Carnarvon's despatch, he was furnished with copies of the Minister's warning, for posting up through the country, "to explain clearly its meaning and effect, so that there might be no misunderstanding on the subject;" and the Resident lost no time in driving into Abdullah's head that we intended to keep the clauses of the treaty one by one." (Précis.) Was this the language of an adviser? was it not that of one in whose hands the government had been thrown?

The visit to Pahang received the same measure of approval; but did it receive more consideration than the Pangkor affair? It is allowable to doubt it, when the Minister is found expressing his trust that the expedition would prevent

"the recurrence of similar acts of violence and hostility on the part of the people of Pahang" (1111. 246), in answering Sir A. Clarke's despatch which declared that there was no ground for supposing that the people of Pahang had committed any act of violence or hostility whatever. One would have thought that a word of advice to the impulsive governor "to look up his evidence" a little before embarking our forces in such an expedition, would not have been inappropriate to the case. The Minister, also, did not notice that the supposed violence and hostility had not been directed against British, but only against Johorean interests.

The Sungei Ujong transactions seem likewise to have elicited approbation only. The Governor was congratulated on the destruction of the stockades of Rambau; the Minister expressing his assurance that the structures had not been destroyed "without full proof that they had been used for piratical or other aggressive purposes" (July 25, 1874. 1111. 38). Perhaps, indeed, this express assurance was intended to convey an implied misgiving. Certainly it would be difficult to share the assurance, simpliciter, upon the evidence of the despatches; for these plainly showed that the stockades were not used for any such purposes. They were no freebooter's lair, but the lawful establishment of the actual and undisputed ruler of the country. Sir A. Clarke's account of them was only that they injured trade in checking the transport of goods, which is what every custom-house has a tendency to do; and his best excuse for their destruction was that their proprietor rejoiced in it (sup. 39).

As regards the expedition against the Bandar, Sungei Ujong's rebellious subject (sup. 40), it was a matter of regret to the Minister, inasmuch as the Governor had "so soon again been called upon to resume hostile operations against any of the Malay chiefs" (March 4th, 1875, 1320. 60). Did this expression imply that the prerogative of peace and war had been placed in the hands of the Governor of the Straits Settlements; and that it was in his power to employ our naval or military forces at pleasure? However, the Minister "did not hesitate to convey his approval of pro-

ceedings which," he observed, "led to so successful a termination of disturbances, which might have otherwise led to an unfortunate state of affairs, seriously affecting our newly assumed position in the Peninsula towards the native rulers" (1320. 60).

These words suggest the question, Did the Minister know what that newly assumed position was? The answer is that he did not. This assertion may appear very daring: but it would not have been made if it had not fallen from his own pen (1512. 75, &c.). Indeed, a year passed between the first dawn and the final admission of the full blaze of light, on his mind (981). There is nothing more remarkable in the whole history of these Malay affairs than the earnestness of the Minister, in a despatch dated as late as the 10th of May, 1876 (1512. 75), in proving how long he had been in the dark as to the position which we had really assumed in the Peninsula through our Residents.

It was not until the end of May, 1875, that the first symptoms of uneasiness betrayed themselves in the official correspondence. The reports of the Residents had then reached the Colonial Office; they were, indeed, then already published; and what a concert had fallen on the ears of the outer world! With different variations, depending on the styles of the various performers, the tune was fundamentally the same; everywhere the Residents had seated themselves on the necks of the native rulers, and ruled as lords and masters, recognizing no other authority than that of their supreme lord, the Governor of Singapore. We were in the full current of annexation when Lord Stanley of Alderley spoke in May, 1874; and yet, a year later, the pilot at the helm was apparently unconscious of how far we had gone or whither we were tending. Unfortunately, when at last those reports attracted his attention, they conveyed no more than an impression that they were "not free from indications of a liability to danger arising out of an assumption by Residents, of duties in excess of their position as counsellors" (1512. 80).

In short, from the 6th of March, 1874, the date of the

first ministerial despatch on Malay affairs, down to the 19th of August, 1876 (1709. 42), one of the latest, the Minister repeatedly warns the Governors not to involve the country in the internal affairs of the Malay States, or to extend our responsibilities in the Peninsula; but passing from the abstract principle to its application, he noticed no compromise of the country in the internal affairs of the Malays or any extension of our responsibilities, in establishing English rulers in Perak, Larut, Salangore, and Sungei Ujong, or in sending our soldiers and sailors to fight the battles of the latter against his domestic and foreign foes. Surely, he was not like the incredulous husband in Tartuffe, waiting for further proofs. Was it not, rather, that his attention was not seriously given to those already in his hands?

The first words of caution which fell in Downing Street are dated the 27th of May, 1875. They desired that care should be taken "not to alarm the Sultan of Perak as to any *undue* interference with him in the internal administration of the State" (1320. 84). They were specially to the address of Capt. Speedy, who had proposed to deal summarily with the debt-slavery question; but they betray as much a desire to keep the light from shining on the Sultan's mind as any strong general disapproval of interference in the administration of his affairs. On the 15th of July following, the Minister warned the new Governor of the care which was necessary "in the character of the advice" to be given by the Residents, "how far it should direct the policy of the rulers, and how far it should be so framed as to avoid unnecessarily committing you (the Governor) to undefined responsibilities connected with the affairs of those states" (1320. 112). This was, perhaps, elucidated a little, on the 27th of the same month, by the direction that the British Residents should, *in all ordinary cases*, confine their action to advice tendered by them to the native rulers, under whose direction the government of the country should be carried on" (1320. 117).

It is not necessary to inquire whether these instructions

were as explicit as a Colonial Governor might desire for his guidance; it is enough to say that Sir W. Jervois treated them as hardly serious, and paid not the slightest attention to them. They proved to him only that the Minister was in utter ignorance of the evolution which had been executed under his eyes by his Residents, who, he told Lord Carnarvon, had directed the government of the States to which they had been sent "since the date of their appointment" (Oct. 21, 1875.—1505. 53).

With all respect, those ministerial instructions were not only too late, they were not quite to the point. The question was not as to the character of their advice, or their interference in ordinary or other cases. It was whether they were counsellors or rulers; and although Sir A. Clarke's letter to Abdullah showed that he had adopted the latter view, it elicited no remark from the Minister. If silence ever gave assent, it was here, for he was bound to express his dissent, if he did dissent from the Governor's views. Sir A. Clarke's letter to the Sultan had plainly intimated that the Pangkor engagement virtually threw the government of Perak into the hands of the Resident and Governor. But Lord Carnarvon, as late as May, 1876, a year later, refused to accept this construction (1512. 78). If it be asked why this was not explained in September, 1874, when the Governor was told to proclaim to the Malays that the Minister held them to the exact fulfilment of their pledges, or in June 1875, when it could be seen that Sir A. Clarke considered himself the supreme ruler of Perak, the only answer seems to be that "beyond question, it was not fully understood at the Colonial Office, that the system pursued towards the native States, though nominally one of advice, was really one of direct or actual government" (1512. 78).

XV.

THE VIEWS OF THE COLONIAL MINISTER AFTER IT.

THE death of Mr. Birch was a great shock to the public. It fairly roused the country and the Colonial Minister to what had been going on in the Malay Peninsula. The London press, echoing the general feeling, began to ask how it happened that colonial officers were suffered to make conquests and increase the responsibilities as well as the territory of the empire without the knowledge of Parliament. And Lord Carnarvon, responding to the general cry, on the 14th of November telegraphed to Singapore that he could not sanction the use of troops "for annexation or any other large political aims" (1505. 26). On the 25th, he telegraphed again, declaring that he altogether disapproved of the Governor's Perak policy, and that, "unless the natives were willing to receive Residents on the footing originally sanctioned, of simply advising the ruling authorities, he doubted whether their continuance in the country could be sanctioned. . . . . Neither annexation nor government of the country by British officers in the name of the Sultan, could be allowed" (1505. 55).

Here was a change of tone; the tide had turned rapidly. We were now far away from the later developments of the Residential system; we were almost on the point of giving it up even in the form originally intended. What is more, not only was the Perak plan repudiated, but its author was reproved for having acted without authority, and without first submitting his scheme to the Minister. It is true, Sir William Jervois might have urged that his predecessor

had acted in excess of his powers and instructions, without incurring any disapprobation. But the reproof was assuredly deserved. It was high time that the Governors of the Straits Settlements should be awakened to a sense of their responsibilities, and be reminded that their powers and duties were limited by the four corners of their commission and instructions. If the Colonial Minister had too long allowed them to forget it, it was not the less important that he should open his eyes to the dangers of such a laxity of discipline.

In his fuller reply (10th Dec. 1875) to the same letter, Lord Carnarvon spoke of the Residential system as having been only provisionally sanctioned as an experiment. He said that he had repeatedly informed the Governor that no annexation of territory was permitted. And he declared that the Government would not keep troops in a country "continuing to possess an independent jurisdiction, for the purpose of enforcing measures which the natives did not cheerfully accept" (1505. 64, 67). In a still later despatch (May 10, 1876, 1512. 75, &c.), the Minister laid it down that the Resident, so far from having been made an administrator by the treaty of Pangkor, was not even a controller.

It looked, then, as if we were reverting to the original scheme; that a Resident would be sent and left in a native state, only as long as the natives really desired it, and that he would be strictly restricted to the duty of giving advice. But time passed; the storm blew over; the Malays were being forgotten for the more present and pressing Herzegovina insurrection and the subsequent incidents of the Eastern question; and when the Colonial Minister laid down his final views and instructions about our future Residential system (June 1, 1876), the pendulum seems to have swung to the other extreme. The "independent state of Perak" was now called, more briefly, "The Province" (1512. 100); and its police force was to be composed, not as the Sultan, but as the Governor of Singapore might deem expedient, bearing in mind only that it was desirable "that it should not appear to the Malays to be that of a dominant power imposed on

them from without" (1512. 100). A force of seven hundred men, it may be mentioned parenthetically, has been, or is to be, raised for this purpose at the yearly cost of $86,000 (1709: 80).

The question whether Abdullah should be suffered to remain for a while longer Sultan of the country, was discussed, in the same despatch, in the tone of a chess-player uncertain whether to take or leave a pawn (1512. 99). He may remain, because it is so difficult to find a better man; but "no pledge for the future, which could inconveniently hamper the course of action" is to be given.

As to the Resident, it was considered that the Residential system had enjoyed a fair amount of success in other parts of the Peninsula, and that if it was "subject to some exceptionally adverse conditions" in Perak, the obstacles which had interfered with its success were apparently such as could be removed (1512. 98). The Residents had, indeed, exceeded the function of counsellors; but that was no reason for "revolutionizing the conditions of their political and administrative functions." So, then, they were to have political and administrative, and not merely consultative functions? It seemed further, that "a modification of previous arrangements would probably be enough for the present, if combined with watchfulness and great caution on the part of the Government:" and "under such conditions, officers might," in the Minister's opinion, "render active and valuable assistance in the administration of Perak." They would continue to be called, not Commissioners, but Residents; and the latter designation was described as "well understood in the East, as indicating that amount of influential advice to the native ruler, and that amount of responsibility on the part of the adviser, which her Majesty's Government have contemplated;" a system, with deference, not altogether plain to the Western understanding.

Sir W. Jervois had proposed to establish a consultative Council of Malays to assist his Commissioners; and this part of his scheme was now adopted. The Malay counsellors were to advise the influential advisers, and to enable them "to gauge

the strength of native feeling in questions of proposed reform" (99). It was deemed undesirable that our officers should interfere "more frequently or to a greater extent" than was necessary in the "minor" details of government. Their special objects were to be the maintenance of peace, the "initiation" of a sound system of taxation, the development of resources, and the "supervision" of the collection of the revenue.

What was precisely Lord Carnarvon's latest ideal of a Resident is a question upon which it is not in any degree necessary to speculate here. Sir W. Jervois may, perhaps, have seen in this despatch the adoption of his own scheme; and certainly it reads more in harmony with a *j'y suis j'y reste* policy, than with those repeated repudiations of annexation or of government by English officers in a native ruler's name, which had pacified public opinion at the time of Mr. Birch's death (sup. 75). But the question is of no practical importance, for in point of fact the Residents, as they were "from the date of their appointment" (1505. 53), so they have continued to be, and are at this moment, the rulers and administrators of the States to which they are assigned, without even the shadow of a Malay council. Those States are beyond question in our actual possession and under our rule; and it is idle to hope that we can avoid the burdens and responsibilities of annexation by interposing the semblance of a native ruler between ourselves and the outer world.

It may be allowed here to express a hope that if England is to remain in possession of those states, an adequate system of administration will be provided for them. At present they are under the absolute despotism of a few officers, under the instructions and control of the Governor of an English Colony 200 or 300 miles off. This may suffice for a short time, and for mere Malays and Chinese, who may be rough-ridden with impunity indeed, though not without discredit. But some Europeans will find their way to the new acquisitions, if those acquisitions should prove of any value; and they must be at once protected and kept in order. The administration of justice is the first want of an organized

society; but what is the rule of right in Perak? It was the Mahometan law, modified by custom and also by the will or caprice of an Oriental despot; is it now to be the same law, modified by the discretion of the Resident and the will of the Colonial Governor? But those gentlemen may think that the principles of any other than martinet law are disagreeably restrictive of the rights of rulers to govern wrong; and are we prepared to tolerate such lawlessness? What will our own countrymen or other Europeans say, if their rights of property should be dealt with in the same free and easy fashion as those of Malays have been treated? Only the other day, one Colonial lawyer was citing with complacency the opinion which he imputed to another, that Colonial Governors had the inherent gift of deporting their *administrés*, even where English law was the law of the land. What will those powerful beings not be able to do, where their powers are limited only by their good pleasure and by that sense of responsibility which has certainly not, hitherto, been much cultivated? Shall our countrymen be subject, at the Resident's pleasure, to deportation without cause, or to extradition without accusation or inquiry? Another question may also arise. If Prince Bismarck or Marshal McMahon does not like the treatment to which his fellow-countrymen's persons or property have been subjected in this no-man's-land, will he write to Lord Derby or send a frigate to Regent Yusuf, our new "ruler"?

If we are to remain in the Malay territories, we ought to give them our law, as we gave it to the adjoining colony. We ought to provide a suitable judicial establishment for them; at present there is nothing worthy of the name. Suitable establishments are also necessary to guard against waste and peculation of the public revenue, and land jobbery. All this may possibly be a little more costly than the present system; but efficiency is more important than cost, and it is of some importance that our rule should be a credit and not a disgrace to us.

XVI.

HOW ABDULLAH AND OTHER CHIEFS WERE DEALT WITH.

To complete the history of our Perak "conquest," it is necessary to review the manner of our dealing with the principal Malays who have figured in it. Abdullah has been deposed and deported to the Seychelles. Several of the principal chiefs share his fate. Ismail remains in banishment in Johore. Maharajah Lela and others have been executed for the murder of Mr. Birch, and others again are undergoing penal servitude for the same offence. Shall we find more justice or more consideration for the natives, in the conduct of judicial proceedings, than we have found in political affairs?

The death of Mr. Birch had all the appearance of an unpremeditated act done by furious men in a fit of passion. On the night of his arrival he had seen Lela, who had shaken hands with him, and he and Mr. Abbott had passed the night unmolested in his boat. In the morning, there was nothing either in the number, appearance, or arms of the people of the village to excite apprehension. He had not been allured to the place; there was no trace of preparation to circumvent him in any way; while to every person acquainted with the race, the interpreter's mad act in striking an armed Malay accounted plainly for his being stabbed, and for the maddening effect on the bystanders, leading to the Resident's death. It was probably the fact that the Resident was so much disliked, which suggested the idea that he had been the victim of a conspiracy to take his life. However, it was necessary to make a thorough investigation into the

circumstances, and, if any trustworthy evidence was found of such a crime, to bring the offenders to justice. It is only a pity that the inquiry was not made at once, before there was time for the growth of myths and inventions in that rank soil.

The Governor, in March, 1876, appointed three Commissioners to go to Perak and search for evidence; but two of the three soon found that they were unable to serve, and the inquiry was left in the hands of the third, Mr. Plunket, who had been a magistrate and head of the police in the colony. He was assisted by a former inspector of police in Pinang, a Siamese named Jeremiah. Witnesses were soon found; and their evidence seemed to the commissioners and to Sir W. Jervois to "go far to prove" that Abdullah and his principal advisers had been implicated in the murder (1709. 13). And the evidence was corroborated, in their eyes, by the "abject terror" into which Abdullah was thrown; a doubtful corroboration It did not occur to them that it might have been their own proceedings, rather than his conscience, which had frightened Abdullah. Innocent men are apt to fall into abject terror when they distrust their judges; and surely Abdullah had reason to fear that the investigation was inspired more by zeal to collect evidence than care in weighing it. Of the zeal there can be no doubt; but of the care, it is enough to say that every statement seems to have been accepted as "going far to prove" guilt. What, for instance, is to be said of the faith given to a kind of conjuring scene, in which the spirits were consulted about the white man, without noticing that the two witnesses who professed to have been at the scene were not agreed as to who was the performing conjurer, or whether it was about the Resident's death, or only about his departure from Perak that the other world was consulted (1709. comp. 22 and 25). What, of the probability of a proposal having been made, to take the Resident's life by poisoning the navigable river which flowed past his house? (22). What credit is due to an entry made by a policeman, purporting to be a report made to him, a few days after the event, by one of those witnesses, recounting

the story of incantation and conspiracy, but which, instead of being recorded in the man's official occurrence book, where it was his duty to enter it, and where its date would have been inevitably fixed, is written in a private pocket-book, which might have been provided the day before it was produced in evidence? Who that has any experience in dealing with testimony, and especially with the testimony of Orientals, can fail to recognize the real character of such evidence as this? And yet it seems to have "gone far to prove" Abdullah's guilt. The conjuring scene is made one of his principal "overt acts;" and the Governor does not hesitate to claim for the policeman's pocket-book all the credit of a contemporaneous entry made in pursuance of his duty, in the face of the silence of the occurrence-book, and the equally significant silence of Mr. Birch's diary (1709. 108).

However, further evidence was collected; and then the Sultan Abdullah, and four or five of his chiefs were invited to Singapore. On their arrival, certain charges were laid before Abdullah, but not before his companions, of having conspired to murder Mr. Birch, and to drive the English out of Perak. The Governor stated to the Colonial Minister that Abdullah would be "permitted to clear himself," and to "explain the evidence against him" (1709. 51, 59). The case was to be heard by the Executive Council of the colony (51); and that body would go into "a full and complete examination" of it (Id.).

But suddenly a change came over these views. Abdullah replied to the charges by a categorical denial of them; and this reply surprised and disconcerted the Governor. He considered it "entirely unsatisfactory" (1709. 68). Had he really expected that the man would avow his guilt of everything laid to his charge?

When he found that the plea of "not guilty" threw on the government the burden of proving the accusation, he was seized with a strange trouble of mind "as to the further mode of procedure in the case" (1709. 91). Was Abdullah, he now asked, to be suffered to appear before the Council? Was the evidence to be taken afresh in his presence? And

was he to be allowed to cross-examine the hostile witnesses and call witnesses in his own defence; nay, to be heard in his own defence?' (91). Why not, it might have been asked in reply. Of what value are the statements of witnesses, if tests are not applied to ascertain that they are not the poisoned fruits of bribery or intimidation, of malevolence or misconception, or mere ignorance or stupidity? But to the English Governor, backed, it seems (1709. 70), instead of being brought to his senses by the colonial lawyers around him, the objections to a procedure which every civilized nation recognizes as indispensable, appeared "indisputable" (1709. 91, &c.). It "involved fresh inquiry;" and then there was the possibility of none of the charges being proved, and the possibility of the witnesses denying the statements "already voluntarily made by them." It therefore occurred to him to deal with the case "politically."

He observed that it was "not always desirable, or expedient, in a political point of view, to have an investigation before a quasi-judicial tribunal in the case of a person in the position of a Sultan of an independent State; that it was sufficient, in order to deal with such a case politically, that the parties dealing with it should be able to justify themselves in their own consciences, and, if necessary to the world at large, on the ground that the evidence was so strong, and so supported by documentary testimony that it appeared conclusively that, whether a conviction could or could not be obtained from a judicial tribunal, yet that abundant evidence would remain to justify the Government in removing the Sultan from Perak, and in taking such other steps as might be necessary to prevent his being an obstacle to the peace of that state." Having arrived at the conclusion, as regards Abdullah, of deciding his case upon the written depositions, without even his judges seeing a witness or asking a question, it was held unnecessary to furnish him with the evidence, or to ask him for any defence. As to the other chiefs, it was "known" that they had "been especially connected with Abdullah in the plot against the Resident, ... and there was no reason why they should not be dealt with as

summarily as the Sultan"—more summarily, indeed, if that be possible; for they were not even informed of what was laid to their charge. They were rather to be congratulated, Sir W. Jervois thought, on being transported without trial, instead of being tried for their lives by a court (92).

This style of reasoning found favour with Lord Carnarvon. He shared the hazy idea of the Governor that because Abdullah was a political personage, and *one* of the consequences of his condemnation would be political (that is, the loss of his imaginary sovereignty), not only he, but half a dozen non-political persons also, might be subjected to criminal consequences, with less regard to justice than is accorded to an ordinary pickpocket; and that judges who had to decide on their fate might be released from all the obligations of ordinary justice and all the rules of rational inquiry.

The written depositions were laid before the Executive Council; and its members, bowing to "the acknowledged inexpediency of proceeding by way of trial," undertook, as Sir W. Jervois says, "to justify themselves in their own consciences, and, if necessary, to the world at large." They pronounced the absent and undefended men guilty, and recommended their deportation (111). They protested, it is true, that they were "not in a position to do more than weigh the evidence already taken;" but if they had had the slightest acquaintance with the nature of their task, they would have known that they were not in a position to do anything of the kind. They would have known that to weigh the evidence of witnesses, it is necessary to see the witnesses, to observe their demeanour when giving their testimony, and to inquire into their means of knowledge, their character, motives, and the other elements of trustworthiness;—perhaps also to give them an opportunity of explaining or retracting their earlier statements.

One of the chiefs appears to have been especially obnoxious to Sir W. Jervois. He was not sent for until much later than the others; but his fate was summarily involved in theirs. This was the Mantri; and as if not altogether satisfied of his guilt on the charge of conspiracy, Sir W.

Jervois threw in the additional facts that he was "an intriguing character," "generally looked upon by the Perak people as a clever scheming man;" and that "Abdullah himself" imputed to him the origin of the disturbances. Besides, he had actually "expressed dissatisfaction openly with the Pangkor treaty;" "he had conspired with Abdullah and Ismail to get that treaty broken;" he had instigated people to treat the Resident "very inhospitably" on one occasion, besides doing other acts of similar heinousness (112). Here were grounds, indeed, for getting rid of a man without trial; for neither English, nor Malay, nor any other law, has any punishment for all these alia enormia.

Such was the justice which, in the name of a great and civilized nation, was dealt out to the benighted Malays. The "Sultan of an independent State," because "politically connected" with the crime (1709. 82), is taken not only from his humble throne, but from his home and country; and half-a-dozen of the principal men of his quondam principality are taken with him, and sent to a distant foreign land, to pine away the remainder of their lives, without knowing their crime, their accusers, witnesses, or judges, and without being allowed to utter one word in their defence. Louis Napoleon peopled Cayenne with his political enemies by a similar summary method; but he had the pretext that he was saving society. If Perak society needed saving, surely no English Minister would be justified in saving it at such a cost to his own and his country's reputation.

Will such a transaction meet with approval and respect in this country? What would have been thought of it if it had been the act of any other government than our own? It was hoped that Lord Carnarvon, who has, we have high authority for believing, "manhood as well as ability and integrity," (Mr. Gladstone, letter to Mr. Chamberlain, January 3rd, 1878), would have had the courage to redress this great wrong, when his attention should be seriously given to it. It may be confidently trusted that no successor to him in the Colonial Office will share the responsibility of

continuing that wrong. Why could we not deal with Abdullah and his companions, as the Indian Government dealt with the Guicowar not long ago? Are the standards of justice of the Indian and Colonial departments different? If the chiefs in question have been guilty of conspiracy or any other offence, let them be punished by all means; but let their guilt be established first. Proof of it is now doubly necessary; for it is required in extenuation of the course which has been pursued, of punishing them without defence. If the inquiry be refused, and the sentence be maintained, the inference will not be favourable either to the wisdom or the conscience of those who are responsible for their fate. Guilty or innocent, those Malays will be regarded as the victims of a burlesque on justice which can excite only pain and humiliation in all impartial minds.

XVII.

WAS THERE A CONSPIRACY?

No amount of evidence, however overwhelming, would have justified this course of punishing men without trial or defence. But was there on the face of the evidence relied upon by the Government even a *primâ facie* case against them? A perusal of the précis of evidence, which sets out, like a French *acte d'accusation*, all the facts and allegations on which the Government relied, and all the inferences which it desired to draw from them, and of such portions of the evidence as have been printed in the Parliamentary papers of last session (1709), leaves the conviction that the whole story of a conspiracy to murder the Resident is utterly unworthy of credit.

That the Malay chiefs met together at various times, to talk over their own and their country's plight, is tolerably clear. The first of the supposed criminal meetings, in July, was held in consequence of the Resident having, in June, threatened Abdullah with dethronement if he did not sign the papers which were required of him, within a certain time. But so far from the meeting being secret, as is alleged, no less than three chiefs told the Resident that they had been summoned to it (1709. 107*a*). Other meetings, as little secret (see ex. gr. 1709. 21), were no doubt held after Sir W. Jervois had gone about the country in September, pressing, by threats and offers, the adoption of his scheme for transferring the government to English officers. What could be more natural or probable than that the chiefs should take counsel together under such circumstances? That

they lamented the impending loss of the independence of their country, and the confiscation of their property and rights, is likely enough. That they may have invoked maledictions on the unhappy officer whom they identified with their misfortunes, is also not improbable. That some of the bolder spirits, such as Lela, threatened and intended resistance if the English attempted to impose their yoke on them, is very likely. To hear the talk of the Malays, who, on the 30th of October, came on board Mr. Swettenham's boat at Blanja, a disturbance seemed imminent. The story went that Ismail had summoned all the chiefs of Perak, to ask them if they would have English rule; if they answered in the negative, he would turn the English out of the country (Précis 26). This story was the natural fruit of language used under the feelings of irritation, anger, and fear which we had excited.

But that there ever was formed a plot to bring about the fatal deed of Passir Sala, there is not the slightest reasonable ground for believing.

Nothing is easier than to invent a tale of conspiracy; nothing was easier, in this case, than to interweave in the conversations which passed at those meetings, fancied deliberations to murder, or, intentionally or otherwise, to twist boasts and threats into plots and schemes. What is not so easy is to make the tale dovetail with the surrounding circumstances and with the conduct and motives of the supposed conspirators. To the credibility of such a tale it is essential not only that the testimony of those who tell it should bear no trace of untrustworthiness, but that there should be found well established facts which admit of no reasonable explanation except by the theory that there was a conspiracy. One or two specimens of the untrustworthy character of the evidence have been cited (p. 81); and what might not have been revealed under cross-examination? But let us see how the story of a conspiracy agrees with undisputed surrounding facts.

At the outset, is it not striking to find the conspirators so exceedingly unguarded as to plot openly, surrounded by a

motley group of servants, boatmen, and women; and yet so cautious as on all occasions to take solemn oaths of secrecy, sometimes verbally (1709. 24), sometimes actually in writing (106). And all those attendants and spectators, afterwards so communicative when, nine or ten months later, evidence of a conspiracy is hunted up by the ex-inspector, all silent as the grave in the interval! Do men plot murders in the presence of bystanders; and if they did, would such plots not leak out for months?

The boastful Lela must have had much of the lawyer in his composition, if he insisted, as we are told, on his orders for the murder being given in writing and under seal by Abdullah. But what did he want such a dangerous document for? Was it to produce the writing in his own vindication? And yet, after getting such orders repeatedly, he is so careless about their custody, that he has not one to produce. It is remarkable, too, that none fall into our hands.

The timid and false Abdullah, also, must have lost all sense of danger, when he put his hand and seal to such a warrant, and delivered it, too, to a chief who was no follower or friend of his. And yet he did so not once, but repeatedly, if we are to believe what we are told. One witness speaks of such a paper given at Passir Panjang; another, of one given at Campong Gaja. One fixes the date at the 17th of September, the other at the 5th of October. Sir W. Jervois imperturbably accepts both stories (1709. 108 c.), without inquiring how it happened that a second edition of the warrant had been called for. Had the first been lost, or did it require renewal or revival by an *alias* or a *pluries*, like a writ? But why was either needed, if it be true that on the morrow of the first meeting at which the Resident's death had been plotted, the 23rd of July, Abdullah had given a written paper to Lela and seven others, declaring that they had his authority for committing the act (Précis 14)? What could be the object of thus multiplying such evidence? In the midst of all this superabundance of fatal documents, is it not natural to ask whether we are in the region of serious fact?

That Abdullah should be mixed up in a plot against the Resident was not antecedently improbable, for he had been repeatedly insulted by him. But was it likely that he would have conspired to expel the English? He could not have remained a day in the country after they left it.

What is not less remarkable in the conduct of this conspirator is, that while he is thus engaged in plotting Mr. Birch's death, he is also plotting his removal from Perak by strictly lawful means. A week after the first meeting, at which the murder had been resolved, Abdullah is consulting Mr. Duke, a lawyer of Pinang, with the view of preparing a complaint to the Governor, of the Resident's interference as regards slaves, and of his acting without consulting the Sultan (Précis 15). Six or seven weeks later, he is again closeted with his English law adviser, complaining of Mr. Birch having got him to sign papers about taxes; of the difficulty of getting money from him; of his independent manner of acting; and of his harbouring slaves, and arresting a man in the Sultan's boat (Précis 18). Again, only three days after he had plotted the Resident's death, he was pouring all his woes into the unsympathizing ear of his old Chinese friend, Kim Cheng (sup. 13), and trying to engage him in "agreements antagonistic to Mr. Birch's policy and position," not to his life, however. (Précis 14.) This man, further, who has prepared the Resident's death in July, is found so pained by the neglect of the latter to pay him a visit, in August, that he makes the sentimental remark to his confidential clerk that it was evident Mr. Birch no longer cared for him (15); but not an allusion to his familiar (the writer of all his lethal documents), to the revenge which, both knew, he had in store! In September, a report that the Resident was to be removed gave him great delight; and the first expression that falls from this enemy of British power which placed and kept him in Perak is, that he will ask the Governor to send them a man straight from England whom they could teach. (18). In the middle of October, he is vowing that if his fugitive slave-girl, Sateka, for whose restoration he had applied to the Resident, is not returned to him, he will send

his clerk with a letter to the Governor about it (1709. 25). Is all this the conduct and language of one who has resolved and planned the death of the Resident and the expulsion of the English?

Another singularity in this plot is that it is always going on, and yet that nothing is done, not only in the way of execution, but even in devising a plan. Like recruits at balance step, the conspirators make great show of movement, but do not advance even an inch. The first meeting is held on the 22nd of July, when it is agreed unanimously, it is said, that Lela shall "stab" the Resident—unanimously by those present, but in the absence of the party principally concerned, Lela himself (1709. 20). On the following day, it is said, Lela consents to this little arrangement made for him in his absence; and he and seven others sign an engagement to carry out the undertaking (that *he* shall stab the Resident), and to keep the matter secret. The Sultan gives, in return, a similar paper stating that they were acting under his authority (14). The second meeting, which is held a month later, in August, had for its more immediate object "to cure Abdullah of a pain in his belly" (25); and it is only after this cure has been effected by divers incantations, that the thought occurred of consulting the spirits as to whether Mr. Birch would, according to one witness, die (22), or, according to another, be driven away from (25), or leave the Residency at Bandar Bahru (26). One of the alleged witnesses to the performance adds that at its conclusion, the conspirators proceeded to consider what course they should pursue if the Resident did not die. The Laxamana, the Nestor or Ulysses of Perak, proposes to achieve the desired object by poisoning the tidal river which flowed near the Residency. This proposal is met by the objection, that "all our people would die;" on which the Laxamana replied that if such was the general opinion, they might put poison in the Resident's food. A Pinang man who was a constant visitor at the residency, was named as a suitable person for carrying out this scheme; but it was objected that if they got into trouble, he could go to Pinang,

and then what would become of them? This formidable difficulty admitted of no easy solution; and the perplexed Abdullah wound up the discussion by observing that it was "a troublesome matter," and that "it was better to leave him alone" (1709. 22). This debate showed no great fertility of resource, indeed; but it is more remarkable for another circumstance. How came it that the conspirators talked over the matter, in apparently complete forgetfulness of their meeting not a month before, and of the "stabbing" plan then settled and solemnly recorded in two writings? Had they forgotten it altogether? Their silence shows either that the first scheme was a subsequent invention; or that the witness of the second plot was himself an inventor, who had not heard of the first. This is the witness, it may be remarked, who was "corroborated" by the pocket-book; but this spoke only of the spirit scene, not of the discussion on poisoning. This last part of his story was therefore the most recent deposit of his brilliant imagination; and the happy thought of poisoning the stream gives it the air of being supplied on the spur of the moment, to please the appetite for plots, stratagems, and snares, which was evidently prevalent.

Other meetings were held; several in September, all manifestly to discuss Sir W. Jervois' scheme. Then comes a meeting on the 5th of October, followed, it is alleged, by Abdullah giving Lela a paper "to kill Mr. Birch." How came he to give that document; what had led to it? There had been a conversation among the chiefs, not about "killing," but about "resisting;" and Lela had said that the others might obey Mr. Birch if they liked, but that he never would; that he intended to act according to their former agreement, and would not allow the Resident to put his foot on his ground; for he had received a letter from Sultan Ismail not to obey Mr. Birch's orders (Précis 23). The man tells Abdullah that he is going to obey his own Sultan's orders and resist any attack of the Resident; and yet we are expected to believe that some hours later, after time for reflection, Abdullah exposed himself to the dangers of giving him this com-

promising writing. We must suppose that his thirst for blood had deprived him of his memory; for had he not already twice given him the same order in writing—on the 23rd of July and 17th of September?

It is not, apparently, until the 28th of October that the conspirators have at last advanced so far as, not indeed to devise any kind of scheme for accomplishing their crime, but to determine generally that Lela should seize the opportunity when Mr. Birch went to Passir Sala to post the proclamation, "to set upon him and kill him." Once more the solemn oath of secrecy is taken; but shortly afterwards a certain Dayang Murwah arrives with a comrade. He had, he tells us, been sent for by the Sultan, who informed him of what had just been resolved, and required his assistance. What assistance did he require at the hands of this Bugis boatman or trader? Were there not plenty of Malays to take a part in the impending crime? Lela alone, we are informed, could collect a hundred men at once. The secret of Murwah's important uses has not been revealed; he is embarrassed to explain how he was so indispensable as to be pressed into the service; and this not by bribes or promises, but by threats of banishment and confiscation of his boat. According to him, Abdullah sent for him again the same night, and, apparently forgetting the whole arrangement solemnly made only a few hours before, tells him and Lela and two or three others to kill Mr. Birch, if possible, the next time he went up the river. Next morning, muskets are distributed, twenty falling to Lela's lot (Précis 25). Need it be added that the rower, Murwah, serves no purpose whatever in the plot, except as a witness,—who will say, a credible witness, even before cross-examination? When men are resolved to give implicit credit to such testimony, it is natural that they should be unwilling to have it exposed to scrutiny or comment.

We hear much of death-warrants and agreements in this tale; but it is remarkable that not a single one has been found, or any other document tending to show that there was any plot. It is true, Sir W. Jervois discovered some papers which he considered very compromising. Let us see

what they prove. There are, first, some four letters from Ismail to the Laxamana, which are said to afford "abundant evidence that the former knew what was going on" (Précis 26), that is, the conspiracy; while the Laxamana's answer is said to prove that he was deep in the project of bringing the two Sultans together and "joining forces with Ismail when he came down the river" to take a part in carrying it out. Now, Ismail's letters or messages (Précis, App.) consist simply of reiterated requests, in October, to the Laxamana to come in the course of that month and give his advice in respect of the doings of the white man. That man, said Ismail, was making a road from Kota Stia to Dedap; and this showed that he had further designs. The Laxamana was better acquainted than the Sultan with white men's ways and their present doings; if he knew or could devise any plan for saving the country, let him mention it, and it could be carried out; the Sultan desired to consult a man of his experience on the affairs of the country. Now, if Ismail knew of "all that had been going on," he would hardly have asked the Laxamana to suggest a scheme; the scheme had been ready for months. The Government case is that the murder and expulsion had been decided, in principle, as far back as July. To all these requests the Laxamana replied, on the 23rd of October, that he would come if he could; that Abdullah intended going on a pleasure trip to a place, half way, where the two Sultans might meet; but that he, the writer, would perhaps be unable to meet him, for he was engaged in preparing to lay a complaint before the Resident against the Police, for stealing two of his girls. Sir W. Jervois calls this a "guarded" letter; but in what respect is it so? It certainly offers no advice, and makes no allusion to the supposed already-devised design. But did this chief write like a man who had been for months engaged in plotting the Resident's death,—with his mind full of an appeal to him for redress? The day before his death, the Resident telegraphed that this Laxamana and another supposed conspirator had accepted offices under the new régime (1505. 57).

The other damnatory document is supposed to show that

Abdullah, the Laxamana, and Lela were all deep in the common plot, because showing that the latter, the actual assassin, "looked for assistance in provisions" from the Laxamana, who waa a friend of Abdullah (1709. 109 c). It was written, too, we are told, just about the time when "most alarming rumours were afloat," and Abdullah had actually been seen in Lela's company. It is from Lela to the Laxamana, and is in these words: "I beg you to assist me with 400 gantangs of rice; pray, *trust me this time.* I must earnestly beg your assistance. *Please tell the price to Pah Nga.* I trust you will grant this" (Précis, App. 72).

A lucid mind must have been sadly clouded with preconceptions, and been wrought up to a frantic determination to see traces of crime everywhere, when this humble plea for some measures of rice on tick—the price (probably about 5*l.*) to be named to old father Nga, perhaps the bearer of the petition—was taken for an assassin's mask! Surely no degree of judicial inexperience could account for so extraordinary a construction of a writing which bore on its face so plainly its simple story.

Such are the compromising documents which went to prove the conspiracy. They prove one thing only—the frame of mind in which these undefended men were judged, condemned, and deported. But without oppressing the reader with further comment, let us simply compare the alleged plot with the circumstances of the event which is supposed to have constituted the execution of it (104), to judge whether they can have any connexion. The plot, we are told, was made in July to murder the Resident when he next visited Passir Sala, and then to drive the British out of Perak (Précis 25). Now let us note how it was carried into execution by our Malay Pazzi, according to the witnesses.

An agent was sent to Pinang in August to purchase ten cases (two hundred) muskets and 25 cwt. of gunpowder—a somewhat ample supply for one of the purposes, perhaps, and hardly a sufficient one for the other—and this part of the story, it may be mentioned by the way, is not even corroborated by any seller or seller's books. Other stores,

surely of very *ancipitis usûs*, were provided, in October, viz., three or four balls of opium, some oil, salt, and rice (Précis 25). These were obtained by the penniless Abdullah from a tradesman, upon an order of the Resident, "thus actually laying Mr. Birch," says the *acte d'accusation*, "under contribution for supplies to be used by his enemies against himself!" (Id. 24). Then, when the fatal morning comes, a hundred men and upwards are summoned by messengers at an early hour; and they flock into the village. So far the witnesses have it all their own way.

But what do the facts, about which there can be no dispute, say? To harmonize with the tale, the hundred men would assemble at some rendezvous, or take up, each, the post previously assigned to him. The arms and powder would be distributed among them; the arch-conspirator would make a more or less skilful disposition of his forces, and prepare the opportunity and give the signal for striking the fatal blow.

But no such facts are to be found, or any fact betokening plan, design, or preparation. The story of the witnesses goes one way: all the facts go obstinately another. Not a single musket or other fire-arm is seen or heard in the village; not even when the sepoys fire on the Malays and kill and wounded several of them; and yet Malays very commonly have muskets and blunderbusses in their houses. Only twenty or thirty natives are to be seen; and they, wearing the ordinary weapons of daily life, the spear, the kris, the sword. The opportunity is not created, or the victim allured or circumvented by prepared murderers; he arrives, passes the night, and remains next morning unmolested, though exposed to attack, until his interpreter commits an act of wanton violence. It is his follower, their own fellow-countryman, who excites the fury of the perpetrators of the crime, and not the Resident. His death is but the sequel or incident of the principal act. The circumstances do not afford the slightest reason to suppose that the master would have been injured, if the servant had not struck an armed Malay; and all the asseverations in the world will

never harmonize the plain tale of sudden passion which these facts tell, with any story of premeditation or conspiracy.

How then are we to account for the story of a conspiracy and the official faith in it? That witnesses should be forthcoming to swear to one, after the idea had been once put into their heads, can surprise no one who knows how fast and easily myths grow among the ignorant and illiterate; especially in the East, where there is plenty of imagination and no scrupulous regard for truth. Once sow the idea of a conspiracy in such people's minds, and circumstantial stories will in no long time spring up in the prolific soil, without any strong consciousness on their part that they are inventing. Ill remembered acts and words receive a new meaning, when viewed by the light of the new idea implanted in them. They get the necessary twist to fit them to it; and then a plentiful crop of conjectures shoots up, and these soon assume the form and consistency of facts. The story is talked over and over with these ever growing accretions, and is soon believed by the narrators themselves. This process accounts for much; but it cannot be doubted, also, that, in the East, men are easily tempted by the prospect of rewards or other advantages to more deliberate concoctions. Have none been reaped in this case? We are not told; but what are we to presume, when cross-examination and defence are excluded?

That such stories should be believed is as little surprising. There is in us all a strong natural tendency to believe rather than to disbelieve what men say, until experience has taught us distrust. Unfortunately, the tendency to believe becomes very much strengthened, when there is also a desire to believe. When this exists, the power of distinguishing between fact and fiction is grievously impaired.

In this Malay case, it is but too plain that a strong conviction was formed at the outset of the inquiry, that the Resident had been the victim of a deliberate plot; and facts were not only sought for, but were desired, to square with the theory—desired with so much eagerness and passion,

that every criminating statement was protected from examination, comment and disproof.

In such a temper of mind, cold judgment makes way for passionate credulity and judicial blindness. With a conviction in the mind that there had been a conspiracy, it was not difficult to see in the appeal to the spirits, in the policeman's "corroborative" pocket-book, in a letter asking for some rice on credit, evidence "going far to prove" guilt; nor difficult to overlook the discrepancies and other objections which stamped much evidence with worthlessness. It was in this temper that even the deputation of Abdullah to Sir A. Clarke seems to have been regarded, somehow or other, as tainted with criminality, for it is styled "secret" (1709. 101); though from whom the secret was kept (except the Colonial Minister) does not appear, since the Governor received the embassy, and Abdullah told Mr. Birch that he had sent it (104).

Like hydrophobia among ourselves last autumn, a Malay conspiracy was a mania in the colony after the Perak war; and it has not yet died out. Only lately, an official who is highly respected and holds an important position in Singapore, on returning from a visit to Perak, published in a local paper that he had alighted on a conspiracy to murder Sir W. Jervois at a meeting in the reception-hall at Campong Gaja, in Sept. 1875. It miscarried, he was assured, only because the heart of the principal conspirator failed him, and he did not give the preconcerted signal to the assembled conspirators, who had 300 or 400 spears piled outside the reception-hall, ready for their deadly purpose.

This, however, the author of the story forgot to add, like the lyric poet who has immortalized another conspiracy, is only what would have happened if the meeting had taken place. For there was no such meeting; and so Abdullah had not the opportunity of displaying his penitence or want of nerve. The origin of the myth is obvious enough. When Sir W. Jervois went to Perak in Sept. 1875, to get both Sultans to make over their country to us, Abdullah was afraid of violence to himself (Précis, 18, 20). He was

led to believe that the Governor's object in visiting the country was to carry him away captive to Singapore for his disobedience to orders. This he was resolved not to submit to; and when he went to meet the Governor, he had a number of armed attendants with him, who would probably have resisted, if any attempt had been made on him. Such facts easily grow into a tale of conspiracy to murder, among ignorant and illiterate people—even when they have no design to humour the white man's predisposition for that kind of story.

XVIII.

MAHARAJAH LELA'S CAPTURE AND FATE.

After the destruction of their villages, Ismail and Lela escaped from Perak. The former, with his retinue of women and followers, found his way to Kedah, and was delivered up to the Colonial authorities, who suffered him to take up his abode in Johore. Lela remained at large for some time longer. A sum of 6000 dollars was set on his head, and smaller sums on the heads of some of his companions; and he and four others fell into our hands in July, 1876. They were subsequently tried for the murder of Mr. Birch, and found guilty. Lela and Indut were executed.[1] The capital sentence on the others was commuted to penal servitude for life, which punishment they are now undergoing at Singapore by virtue of a Colonial ordinance passed by the Minister's instructions.

The history of this capture and the character of the trial afford fresh illustrations of what has been considered fair dealing with natives by English officials, and is remarkable for the manner in which those proceedings were sanctioned and defended by the Colonial Minister.

In May, 1876, Sir W. Jervois was staying with the Maharajah of Johore, when he was told that Maharajah Lela and four other Malays, charged with having been concerned in the murder of Mr. Birch, were living in concealment in the village of Kota Lama in Perak, but that they were willing to give themselves up to us, if they could only be

[1] Datu Sagor, another chief, also executed, had been captured earlier.

assured that they would not be executed without trial. They were said to be the more anxious to surrender to us, as they were in fear of assassination by other chiefs who were supposed to be afraid of their revelations. At the same time, for the same reason, Abdullah was offering them bribes to induce them not to surrender! (1709. 43).

It does not appear why the Governor did not direct the Resident of Perak or other officers of our government to take measures to arrest the men, or to engage them to surrender on those assurances of a fair trial for which he believed that they were longing.

Mr. Davidson, the Resident, knew well where the outlaws were, and a promise given by him would have been more readily believed by the Malays to be authorized, and more readily trusted, than all the assurances of all the Rajahs of the Peninsula. But Sir W. Jervois seems to have preferred resorting to native agency on this, as on other occasions (ex. gr. 1709. 7). He requested his host, the Maharajah, to send messengers to Lela and his comrades, to inform them that if they would surrender to us, they should have a fair trial (1709. 45). He also instructed Mr. Davidson not to interfere in the matter.

Emissaries were accordingly sent to them by the Johore chief. They returned, and then more were sent with letters from the Maharajah (Mr. Vaughan, in *Straits Times*, August 28, 1877) and Sultan Ismail to Lela. The Governor saw this second set, among whom was the English secretary of the Johore ruler; and on this Englishman, he says, he "impressed strongly that *he*, the Governor, authorized no other arrangement than an offer of a fair trial if the men would surrender to us (45). The messengers set off and saw the men.

Now the question is, What passed between them? The Governor's account is that his guarantee was "of course" given (1709. 43); in other words, that the Malays agreed with the messengers to surrender to us on the Governor's promise of a fair trial. But the Malays told a very different tale. Both before and after their trial, they protested that

they had given themselves up on the assurance that they should not be prosecuted at all, but should be treated with the same consideration as their old Sultan.

The Governor, feeling it important to inquire into the truth of this assertion, called on the Johore chief for an explanation. He and his employés denied the statement, and they declared at the same time that the only promise which they gave was a safe-conduct in writing, a translation of which was forwarded. The Governor, without calling on the Malays for proof of their assertion, which they were prepared to give (Mr. Vaughan, in *Straits Times*, August 28, 1877), pronounced it to have been "concocted as a part of their scheme of defence" (1709. 118).

His despatches, however, supply abundant proof that it was true. It might be asked, however, at the outset, on what authority rested his own allegation that his guarantee had been "of course" given, and that the men had agreed with the messengers to surrender to us on the faith of it. The prisoners plainly denied it; the messengers say they gave no promise except a safe-conduct: now let us see what testimony the facts supplied by the Governor himself bear on the question. The men did not surrender to any British officer in Perak, as they evidently would, if they had agreed to surrender to us—especially if they were in fear of assassination. They demanded a passage to Johore. They would go there in no English vessel, but only in the steamer of the Johore chief, who sent it to them in hot haste, at the Governor's telegraphed request. They stipulated further, that Lela's brother should be allowed to go to that place and return—evidently to reconnoitre—before they started, and they withdrew this demand only when the second set of messengers arrived with the Johore letters. Finally, they required a safe-conduct in writing, to insure their safe passage across our territory and on the voyage. And against whom, is it supposed, was this safe-conduct? Against the European.[2] What does every one of these facts tell, but

[2] "It is to declare," says the translation of this paper, "that we (the

that the men desired to escape from British territory, and that they feared above all things to fall into our hands? Can it be doubted that they did not leave their hiding-place without the conviction that they had provided effectually for placing themselves out of the reach of our power? And yet in the face of these accumulated precautions for their safety, and of the concurrent statements of both the outlaws and the messengers that nothing was said about surrender to us, we are called upon to believe that the former agreed to surrender to us at the end of the voyage, forty-eight hours, perhaps,—on the *verbal* assurance of the signers of the safe-conduct, that the English Governor would give them a fair trial!

If further proof be needed, let us note the following circumstance. When the men arrived in Johore, both the Governor and the native chief spoke to them about surrendering. The former informed them that "they must surrender to the British Government" (1709. 46). The latter, on sending them to Singapore, wrote that he had assured them that, "after surrendering themselves," they would have a fair trial (50). Not only was the surrender spoken of as something new and to be done in the future, but no allusion was made to any previous surrender or negotiation or agreement for that purpose. A ceremony of surrender was afterwards performed at Singapore; but this could of course not alter the nature, or cure the vice of the original capture; for the men were then no longer free agents.

It has been remarked that the safe-conduct gave protection only during the voyage. Does this prove that the Malays were indifferent to the danger of falling into our

messengers) do hereby promise that as to M. Lela (and others) going over to Johore, to see Sultan Ismail and the Maharajah of Johore, we therefore do hereby declare that they have nothing to fear and doubt on their way from within the country of Perak, till they are safely on board the Maharajah's steamer at Teloh Kartang in the Larut river; and no *European* will touch or interfere with them when they are on board the steamer, but they will be quite safe and in peace till they are duly landed in Johore; and whatever may be their affairs, we will accompany them together, to go before the two above-named rajahs" (1709. 125),

power after they should reach Johore, and had not received any assurances against it? Is it likely that they would have resorted to every possible precaution to escape from us for two days, and yet were ready and willing to be delivered up to us at the end of that time? The supposition is too absurd for belief. The reason why the safe-conduct was limited to the voyage is obvious; it was because at the end of the voyage the men would no longer be in the power of the messengers, from whom they had exacted that written promise. But, coupled with the other circumstances connected with their departure from Perak, it forces the conviction that the men never would have left their refuge if they had not received either from the messengers or from the letters of which they were the bearers—the contents of which have not been made known—abundant assurances of safety and protection after they should reach the shore of Johore.

It is obvious, at all events, that the men went to Johore on the invitation of the ruler of that country. This appears plainly enough on the face of the safe-conduct, to say nothing of the steamer and embassies sent to them, and without making conjectures as to the contents of the letters. Can it be contested that under that invitation there lay the promise known to men of every race and colour, that the inviter would observe the ordinary laws of hospitality towards the invited; and therefore would do nothing to put their lives in peril? It seems, however, to have been argued by this chief, or for him, that the terms of the safe-conduct absolved him from any such promise. The promise of his men, it was triumphantly urged, was limited to the voyage; and he was therefore morally free to deal as he pleased with his guests when the voyage was over. So argued an Earl of Argyle, who induced a McGregor to surrender on the assurance that the earl would "see him safe to England," and who hanged his prisoner as soon as he had suffered him to touch the English bank of the Tweed. The common sense and conscience of mankind, however, have not ratified the Scotch proceeding, nor will it, with all deference, ratify the Malay one.

It was submitted to the Colonial Minister on behalf of

the surviving Malays, that as the Johore chief was our agent in the transaction, we ought not to take advantage of his or his employés' act towards them. But without either accepting or rejecting the casuistry which cost the McGregor his life, he laid down that the safe-conduct was "the promise given to the men." He could not believe that the messengers would have departed from Sir W. Jervois' "plain orders" (Correspondence with Abor. Prot. Soc., August 16, 1877); and he maintained that they *had* given the Malays a promise of a fair trial; and, of course, that the latter had agreed, in the Perak forests, to surrender to us.

He added that "with regard to the necessity for a safe-conduct to Johore (a question entirely distinct from the conditions of their surrender to the British authorities), Lord Carnarvon is of opinion that the fear under which these men lived, of being assassinated by the agents of the other chiefs implicated in the murder of Mr. Birch, explains the fact of their insisting on such a promise" (Correspondence with the Abor. Prot. Soc., August, 1877); in other words, that the fear of being murdered by Malays had inspired Lela to ask for protection against "the European," that is, the English Government and its officers. It is not for the orthodox mind to gainsay *ex cathedrâ* utterances.

Lela and his companions had been promised a fair trial. Let us see what course was taken to determine the question whether they had murdered or ordered or plotted the murder of the Resident. That question was one of mixed law and fact—what part had they actually taken in the act; and did the circumstances justify or extenuate their conduct? To refer such a question as the latter especially, to a tribunal of ignorant Malays would have been to submit it to a very incompetent authority, no doubt; but if there was no other substantial objection to the judges chosen, and the latter were allowed to conduct the inquiry in their own fashion, without our interference and unembarrassed by our presence, the accused, as Malays, could not have objected to such a trial. A court of English lawyers would have dealt with the case

thoroughly and satisfactorily; and the Malays, long familiar with the manner in which justice is administered in our colony, would probably have had complete confidence in it. Or it might have been composed partly of Malays and partly of English judicial officers. But another kind of Court was devised which combined the double evils of a tainted Malay element, and of English officers without power to do good, while their presence was calculated to do harm. The Court consisted of two Malays, of whom one was the notorious Yusuf, the twice rejected for his "notorious demerits" (1709. 54), and whose feelings for Lela may be judged from the fact that he had urged the Resident to "make an example" of him (Précis 24). The prisoners objected to him as a judge, but in vain. Two English assessors were appointed, but their task was limited to controlling the judges in matters of procedure and evidence, which was to be governed by English law.

Besides these controlling judges of procedure and evidence, there appeared before the Malay Court an English civil official (with the indispensable Commissioner of Singapore Police at his elbow) as prosecutor, demanding a verdict and capital sentence, and with full powers of direct examination and cross examination. The prisoners had a counsel assigned to them by the Governor; but this gentleman's eloquence was limited, by Sir W. Jervois' orders, to "a plain statement of the facts on which he relied;" and this, apparently, because it was "probably unavoidable;" and, unlike his opponent, he was by the same orders not allowed to put a question either to his own or to the hostile witnesses, except through the court (1709. 120). The prisoners, instead of being in the custody of policemen, were guarded by a lieutenant's guard of the 80th regiment. Now, who that has any knowledge of the weakness and timidity of the natives of the East, can believe that any tribunal of them, under such circumstances, would be able, though well-disposed, to hold the balance even between their accused countrymen and such a formidable opponent as the British government; or would hesitate to pronounce the decision which, they be-

lieved, the latter desired. To call upon natives to decide between such parties, especially in the presence of an armed force, is but one of the worst forms of oppression which a civilized and strong Power can practise on weak, timid, and not high principled men.[3]

To the objections, however, which were offered to such a tribunal and procedure, the Colonial Minister had a short answer. It was enough that Mr. Vaughan, the counsel of the prisoners, had written to the Governor, after the trial, that he considered the trial "an exceedingly fair one." But without questioning that gentleman's authority, is it clear that the Minister quite seized the exact effect and extent of his approval? Mr. Vaughan's certificate of fairness was surely nothing more than a declaration that no act of unfairness had been committed during the trial; for he certainly did not withdraw the objection which he had already strenuously urged to the exceeding unfairness of trying his clients by such a judge as Yusuf; nor did he say that he had found anything excessively fair in not being allowed the same right of examination as was accorded to his opponent.

For that Judge, however, and for the Court of which he was a member, both the Governor and the Minister manifested a rare reverence. The former pleaded against the remission of the capital sentence on Lela, on the ground that such leniency would "convey the impression that we did not respect the decisions of the native court" (1709. 119); and the latter expresses "the satisfaction" which animated him when he learned that the regent "had followed the suggestion" made by himself, the Colonial Minister, of commuting some of the sentences. He observes that this same Yusuf (who was by this time set up by Sir W. Jervois

[3] In the Blue Book, c. 1111 (pp. 91 & 180) will be found another trial by a native tribunal at our dictation and under the guns of a man-of-war, in which eight men were convicted and executed for piracy, on evidence which the Colonial Secretary, writing officially, but in vain, for further proofs, described as "very meagre." Id. 104.

as "regent," vice Abdullah, deported) "allowed the trial to be held in the presence of English officers, and in a manner analogous to that observed in an English Court of law, and with the care and deliberation secured by such a procedure" (132); but Sir W. Jervois's despatches make no mention of any such permission having been asked.

Finally, Lela is spoken of as an "assassin;" but with all deference, this expression cannot alter the nature of the act for which he suffered death. Even Sir W. Jervois himself admits that the evidence at the trial went no further than proving that Lela and his companions intended "to *resist* Mr. Birch, should he attempt to put his foot on Passir Sala ground" (1709. 117); and it is beyond all dispute that the Resident remained untouched and respected until he did what was an act of war against Lela's actual and lawful sovereign. Resistance to that act was by every recognized law a lawful act. Lela was not only entitled, but bound by duty to resist it. But what is this new doctrine? An officer goes with an armed force to do an act analogous to boarding a foreign ship of war and hauling down her colours; he loses his life in the course of the resistance offered to his attempt; and the man who ordered the resistance is pronounced an assassin! By what law is he an assassin? By one only, assuredly—the law of the strongest; that shameful law which demands passive submission to every outrage, indignity, and insult, upon pain of an ignominious death; a law to which brave men may succumb but do not submit, and which will find no respect among us, if we will judge others as we would desire to be ourselves judged.

Let us mourn the fate of our own unfortunate countryman; let us make every allowance, too, for those who in the agony of grief or fury for his death, might have been blinded to every fact which stood between them and revenge. But the time for passion was long past; and when twelve and eighteen months after the event, the Governor who ordered that unauthorized enterprise and the Minister who repudiated it, stigmatize the Malay village chief as an assassin, it is necessary to recall clearly and firmly to mind

the real facts. That Malay did no more than what any Englishman would have done in his place. He did his duty by his sovereign in resisting an attack on his sovereign's rights; and though words of disgrace and horror may be heaped upon his grave, the time will come, if it has not come already, when his execution will leave very different feelings from pride or satisfaction in all who value the fair fame of our country.

XIX.

RETROSPECT.

In closing the relation of all these various proceedings, it is natural to ask what was the object of them; what advantage was expected to be gained from them? To suppose that the country or Parliament desired accretions to our Empire from the mangroves of the Malays is too absurd to raise a smile. The Government, too, surely did not thirst for such acquisitions. There were not even barren laurels to be won in all their length and breadth; much less an investment to be made, or a British interest to be protected. Indeed, now that it has got its conquests on its hands, it seems to regard them with little satisfaction. It feels that "for a long time to come, the task of bringing those States with which we are connected by the presence of Residents, into a state of peace and order, will tax the utmost resources of the Colonial Government." Happily it desires no more of them; it has recently rejected a scheme to bring three of the confederate States "under British protection;" and protested against "a further and especially an undefined and uncertain extension of our political responsibilities in the Malay Peninsula" (1709. 42).

One of these Malay countries, indeed, seemed to fall within the principle of "manifest destiny." The northern province of Perak, Larut, had, even before the troubles of 1873, virtually passed into the hands of its Chinese inhabitants. Their numbers had become so large in comparison with that of the Malays, that the latter had lost all power of governing and controlling them. They were, if not already

our subjects by birth, closely allied to our Pinang Chinese by the ties of country, tribe, blood, and trade. They hated the Malay as a ruler, for they always found in him an oppressor and spoiler, and never a protector. They desired above all things to throw off his rule, and pass to ours; it would have been an act of humanity to accept them as our subjects; and they were numerous and rich enough to pay the cost of governing them. But besides, under Malay government, they were becoming a chronic nuisance to us; for every squabble in their mines and forests threatened a corresponding one among their brethren in Pinang. If our neighbour creates a nuisance and cannot or will not abate it, are we not entitled by the law of self-defence to enter and put it down, and also to retain possession of the place, if a renewal is to be apprehended? This was the case in Larut. The Malay could not keep his subjects in order, and their disorder spread to our own subjects. Here were some reasons for the annexation of Larut, with advantage to all concerned, including the Malay chiefs, if due compensation were made to them for the loss of their rights.

But as regards the rest of the Malay Peninsula, of what advantage is its possession to us? It has no population to make its riches available; it can no more be colonized by Englishmen than the burning plains of India, and there seems no political or strategic reasons for our occupying even a single point along its coast. Our old possessions have hitherto seemed sufficient for the command of the Straits, and the protection of our commerce. Our rule in the Peninsula would unquestionably be an advantage and a blessing to the few scattered Malays themselves, and to Chinese immigrants; and if the subject were to be regarded from the point of view of their interests alone, it cannot be doubted by those who know how detestable native rule is, that it would be most desirable to bring the whole Peninsula under our law. It would also open a new field of enterprise to a few European planters and adventurers, and mercantile men in connexion with London and Hanse Towns houses. But regarding the question only with an eye to our own interests, this

country not only gains nothing from such possessions, but it is brought into immediate contact with bordering States, and exposed to occasional outbreaks of those inglorious little wars which cost always treasure, often blood, sometimes discredit. Is it the duty or the interest of the British taxpayer to provide at such a cost and risk a paradise for strangers, or even for his own fellow-subjects? He will be reminded of this question in the course of the present session, when called upon to pay the bill of the Perak and Nine States expeditions.

So much for "British Interests," in the true meaning of the term, the interests of the nation at large. It was rather for the sake of local interests that the appropriation of the Malay States was made, though it is difficult to exclude altogether from sight the subject of personal distinction in the local officers.

The inhabitants of our settlements were near a country full of tin and other articles of commerce which were unappropriated, but access to which was obstructed by little communities of men who commanded the roads. They desired to get at those riches; but when they went up the rivers in quest of them, they were mulcted; when they entered into contracts, they were sometimes cheated. They thought that, in these circumstances, the country of their birth or allegiance was bound to espouse their cause, and enforce their rights. Such a view was, perhaps, natural; it is at least general in the far East; but it is nevertheless utterly unreasonable. If a Malay bond is to be enforced by an English man-of-war, why not a Turkish bond? Foreign investments would rise in the market, if it was once established that the armies and fleets of England were always ready to support the demands of English holders.

But although, in principle, the answer once given to this claim—that those who choose to run such risks for the prospect of gain, must take the consequences—is unquestionably sound, it would probably not have been difficult to obtain for the colonists something of what they wanted. Their traffic might have been secured from undue exactions, by fixing, by

treaties with the native rulers, the tariff of dues and tolls and the places of their levy. New stockades and demands might then have been summarily put down without investigating titles, or taking sides in a native quarrel; and the payments recognized by treaty might have been commuted by the Colony whose denizens were interested in the traffic. Such treaties would not have entangled us in Malay affairs. They would have been faithfully observed; for the Malays would never have courted the visit, in anger, of a man-of-war.

It would have been only necessary to provide, in addition, for reasons already mentioned (p. 9), that all interference with native States should be left exclusively to the responsibility of the Admiral of the station, and that the Colonial Governors should be strictly confined to the administration of the local affairs of the Colony. The eyes of the Colonial Minister will probably be opened to the impolicy of the present course when he learns from the recent Mohr business (p. 47) that a Colonial Governor or administrator takes it upon himself, on the "personally conducted" principle, too, that is, without consulting his Council (p. 38), to pronounce the will of an independent Malay Sultan invalid, and his eldest son disqualified to succeed him, though apparently recognized by the chiefs, and then to order an election, even nominating the electors, and sending an officer to receive or reject votes (Debate in Singapore Legislative Council, 7th December, 1877). Surely it is ill-suited to the dignity of the British nation and Government to have their name mixed up, and perhaps not with credit, in matters tainted with native intrigue, trickery, and violence.

It may be asked, What would the Malays and the Chinese and the Turkomans and Afghans think of us if we withdrew from our possessions? To those who govern their conduct, not by their own judgment, but by the judgment which others may be supposed to pronounce on their motives, the argument suggested may be conclusive. But surely this is not a high principle in public any more than in private affairs. If we could muster fortitude enough to brave the

Oriental Mrs. Grundy, and to expose ourselves to disparaging suspicions which the smallest of our gun-boats is always more than sufficient to dissipate, it might still be submitted with confidence, that we had no interest in taking those countries, and that the sooner we leave them, the better it will be for the national fame and exchequer. Let Salangore keep or dismiss Tunku Kudin, let the Klana and Bandar of Sungei Ujong and the chief of Rambau settle their various differences in their own way. Let Ismail return to Perak, if he likes, and Abdullah, if he dares. They and the obnoxious Mantri, and the Laxamana and the other chiefs need not be kept in life-long punishment, through the fear that their presence in the Malay Peninsula would "threaten the safety of her Majesty's dominions" (1709. 67).

But even if our interests had rendered it desirable that all the Malay States should become subject to the British Crown, it would not have been necessary to resort to "residential" or other such means to acquire them. They might have been had almost for the asking; nay, even without the asking. There was probably hardly a native ruler or chief who would not have willingly surrendered his government and territory to England, on the simple condition of reasonable compensation in the shape of pensions. Such an offer was repeatedly made by different chiefs at different times to the Indian authorities; among others, it is believed, by the late Sultan of Perak. Never might territorial acquisitions have been made on better terms than here, if we would but have dealt with the Malays, with justice and consideration.

We had no need, if we wanted their land, to worry and exasperate them, and stir up hatred among them against us.

But we made ourselves masters of one territory, by dethroning an unoffending ruler, to make way for a creature who was willing to pay for his place by accepting a Resident. In another, we gained a footing by espousing the cause of a native chief, and fighting his battles against his foreign and domestic enemies; and then we set up a Resident over him. In a third, the *modus operandi* was to impose a native usurper on the Sultan and people, and to maintain him in

his position, first by fomenting war against them among the neighbouring states, and then by introducing a Resident. These Residents, in all cases, were represented to them as advisers; and in all, as soon as those officers entered the country, they threw off their unassuming garb, and seized all the powers of Government. In every case, too, contrary to the Minister's instructions (1111. 39), the cost of the Residents and their establishments was imposed on the countries which were subjected to them. These first steps were followed by that series of acts, political and judicial, which are now left to the judgment of the reader.

It is not difficult to see what were the causes of so much that looks so Machiavellian and was actually so far from righteous.

In both Sir A. Clarke and Sir W. Jervois the country had servants of great, even unusual merit and distinction in all that regards professional eminence and personal character; but with all the most sincere respect for them, it must be added that though men, it is believed, of generous and kindly feelings, they were without sympathy or consideration for the natives. In common with so many Europeans in the East, they had a contemptuous indifference for their feelings and rights. How else explain, for instance, that Sir A. Clarke saw no objection to the confiscation of their proprietary rights, or to interpreting his own treaty as a transfer of the government of Perak into his own hands; or that in the complaints of the Malays about the enticement of their women, he saw nothing calling for animadversion except the impatience of the aggrieved? In the same spirit, to carry out his Perak scheme, Sir W. Jervois was equally ready to recognize or repudiate either Ismail or Abdullah, and even to buy Yusuf; and he did not hesitate to deal with Lela, Abdullah, and other Malays, as he surely would not have dreamt of doing with men of his own race.

This want of consideration, it is necessary to add, was never more lamentably shown than when Sir A. Clarke sent Mr. Birch to Perak to carry out his "policy." What has been already related of the course which the latter pursued

there must suffice to show how ill-qualified he was for such a post. It is painful to say this, or to say a word which has the semblance of anything but kindness for one who is no more, and who died in the service of his country.* But it is a fact in this history too important to be put out of sight. It is, in truth, the pivot on which the greater part of the history turns; the cause to which the loss of other English, as well as many native lives, and much misery and suffering are to be attributed. With much ability, energy, and integrity of purpose, Mr. Birch had defects which pre-eminently unfitted him for dealing with Malays, whose language even he did not understand. This was well known in Singapore before his appointment; and it ought not to have been unknown in Downing Street, if those confidential reports which Governors make yearly to the Colonial Minister, on the officers of the Colony, are anything better than eulogies or lampoons on the objects of their favour or aversion. The appointment, like many other deeds in this unhappy Malay story, may have been well meant; but it inspired at the time the worst forebodings for himself, unfortunate man, as well as for the Malays; and it proved fruitful of disaster.

But further, both the Governors were without experience in the East, or in the questions and difficulties which they had to meet in the new field of duties to which they were called. They needed, therefore, and more even than men of less ability and energy, the controlling hand of the Statesman; and with all the respect due and felt for a distinguished and popular minister, it must be questioned whether they got it. Lord Carnarvon, it is true, was not kept as well informed as he ought to have been, of all that was going on. Under the government of India, the supreme authority would not have been kept in ignorance of such facts, as, for example, the instructions given to the Residents (1512. 79), or the course which they, one and all, adopted from the date of their appointment, or the Perak "revenue" scheme, or the deputation sent to the Governor to complain of Mr. Birch's conduct; and it may be suggested that both in this respect and in respect of the departure from instructions,

and the overstepping of powers by Governors, the Colonial department might advantageously maintain a more rigorous discipline. But of what avail is the fullest information, if due attention is not given to it? And it seems to result from the examination of the earlier part of this Malay history (sup. 68, &c.), that the course of affairs was not watched by the Minister with all the vigilance which was desirable. Though he gave general instructions against entanglements in the affairs of the Malays, he did not observe that his orders were not obeyed. His "advisers" of native rulers became masters of the rulers' territories, without his noticing it; and Sir A. Clarke was suffered to act as though he had been sent on a mission, in his own words, "to put a final stop to the cruelties and oppressions of the Malays" on each other (1111. 251—253).

And this seems to be the only explanation of the sanction given to that high-handed act, the deportation of apparently innocent men without trial or defence, and to the treatment of Lela and his companions, which have been the principal subjects of these pages, and which, for the sake of our own national fame as well as for the Malays themselves, are earnestly submitted for reconsideration.

If we now find ourselves saddled with the burden of unprofitable possessions, and saddled too with the more grievous burden of having not well got them, some portion of the blame falls on the public and Parliament. They give little real attention to such subjects. If a town is shelled in some distant land, or a territory is annexed, or some hecatombs of natives are slaughtered, up we throw our hats and rend the air with cheers for the gallantry of our troops or tars, and for the long range and accuracy of their weapons. But nobody asks about the rights and wrongs of the matter. It is assumed as beyond dispute, especially if a few strong terms are officially sprinkled on them, that the savages or barbarians provoked their fate by overtaxing our forbearance, and that we had justice and right, as well as the science of destruction, on our side. A minister would be

bold indeed, who disturbed this happy temper by censuring the hero of the hour for a violation of justice or an infraction of public law. It is only when things go wrong, when defeat or other disaster overtakes us, that we look about for a back on which to lay the burden; and then, and then only, there awakens in all concerned that sense of responsibility which is the beginning of political wisdom.

It is one of the most touching and painful facts in history, that from the days of the first Portuguese discoverers to the present time, the natives, whether of India, China, Japan, Java, or the South Seas, received their first European visitors with open arms; and everywhere they met with ruthless treatment in return. We have advanced, no doubt, beyond the conquerors of the 16th and 17th centuries; but even now it seems that the less civilized races of men cannot come into contact with us without enduring suffering and wrong.

Let us not, then, be surprised if they still shrink from contact with us. Let us not wonder if native chiefs in and beyond India are not enthusiastic for the aid and advice of a British Resident; or if, as happened only the other day in Thibet, the mere rumour that English explorers are likely to enter their country, creates such terror as to lead to orders being issued to break down all the bridges on the road of such visitors. Will the day never come when we shall teach weaker races that the words Christianity and Civilization, which are always in our mouths, mean for them something else than conquest and oppression? Shall we never earn the name of being a people that has self-respect enough to be just to them, or heart enough to show mercy upon them?

APPENDIX.

PIRACY IN THE STRAITS OF MALACCA.

THE Parliamentary Books of 1872 and 1875, are so full of general assertions about piracy in the Straits, that they give the reader the impression that the Malay States of the Peninsula were little better than nests of pirates. This was evidently Sir A. Clarke's belief, when, not long after his arrival in Singapore, he spoke in the Legislative Council of "the robberies and piracies which we had allowed to disgrace our shores for so many years" (1111. 249), and of Pangkor island as having "from time immemorial formed the rendezvous and harbour of the pirates of that coast" (250). Two States are especially singled out for this bad eminence, Perak and Salangore. I read all those general statements with wonder, for I had filled a judicial office in the Straits Settlements for fifteen years without hearing of those formidable pirates or their misdeeds; and after searching the Parliamentary papers and other sources of information, I have no hesitation in asserting that the accusation is unfounded. Let us take first the case of

PERAK.

The ancient kingdom of Malacca, of which Perak formed a part before the Portuguese conquest of 1511, was a wealthy commercial emporium; and Achin, under whose dominion Perak then passed and continued until the Dutch took Malacca, in 1641, was the powerful rival of Portugal for supremacy in the Straits of Malacca. Neither of those kingdoms was a piratical State. After the capture of Malacca by the Dutch, Perak fell, if not under their sovereignty, at least under their influence. They built a fort on the island of Pangkor to command the trade of the country, which they made their monopoly; and it is idle to suppose that that maritime and commercial Power would have tolerated piracy at its very doors. The Dutch retired in 1795, when we, in turn, took Malacca from them; but as we had a naval station at Penang, from 1805 to the close of the great war in 1815, is it likely that Perak could have entered on a career of piracy within a few miles of such a neighbour?

When the commerce of Singapore, which was founded in 1819, began to expand, the fleets of the far eastern Sulu and Lanun, and of the Linga freebooters—the real Malay pirates of our histories—were attracted by the prospect of booty to the neighbourhood of the peninsula. As we had withdrawn our maritime police, they plundered vessels and ravaged the coasts on both sides of the peninsula. On one occasion they established themselves at the mouth of the river Kurow, in Perak, and thence actually made descents on our Province Wellesley. They took possession also of the isle of Pangkor; where they refitted their vessels and kept their stores and captives. In 1826 the Sultan of Perak, unable to get rid of such dangerous neighbours, and desirous of securing a powerful protector in their place, executed a cession of the island to the East India Company; but we have the explicit assertion of Colonel Low, the officer to whom the offer was made, that it was not accepted, and possession was not taken (see sup. p. 15).

The island remained, apparently for some ten years after its proposed cession, in the hands of the pirates. For several years after the establishment of Singapore, the Government left its trade unprotected; so that the Chinese traders of that place had to fit out armed vessels, with the sanction of our local authorities, to protect their junks. The English merchants complained warmly to the Government of India of this want of protection; they were told, in reply, that they should have it if they would pay for it by import and export duties: but they preferred the pirates to the custom-house officers—the transient to the permanent evil. At last, in 1836, the Government awoke to a sense of its duty; the Andromache, the Wolf, and the Zephyr were sent to the Straits, and they soon effectually cleared them of the piratical bands.

On that occasion the question whether any of the Peninsular States were what are called piratical States, was explicitly raised and considered. Six Malays who had been taken in that cruise having been sent to Calcutta for trial for piracy, the Indian Government caused inquiry to be made as to the nature of the piracy which had been going on in the Straits of Malacca. The result of their investigation was submitted to the Judges of the Supreme Court; and they declared that there was no reason to believe that any of the States of the peninsula sanctioned or recognized any private confederacies of their subjects to commit acts of piracy. I believe that this was the truth as regards all of them; but at all events as regards Perak and its inhabitants, there is not the slightest ground for representing them as pirates or disposed to piracy. They were for some time its victims; they sought our protection by offering us a commanding position on their coast, and they sought it in vain. Those who lately set up the old cession of Pangkor impliedly throw on our Government much responsibility for the piracies, since we should have suffered a possession of ours to remain the head-quarters of piratical fleets for years.

It is true that piracy reappeared on the coast of Perak only five years ago. But again, who were the pirates? Not Perak Malays, but Chinese miners who were driven chiefly by the mischievous instrumentality of

our colonial officers to plunder, in order to save themselves from starvation (1111. 143, 164, sup. p. 12).

So much for fact. But although the Malay pirate, the professional buccaneer, has long since disappeared from the Straits of Malacca, his ghost is still sometimes evoked (see sup. p. 17). Like other ghosts, however, he melts into thin air at the approach of light.

That robberies and murders have, since 1836, been occasionally committed by Malay and Chinese and other malefactors in those waters, is not disputed; any more than that they are occasionally committed at the present time in better famed seas much nearer home. But such crimes no more justify the assertion that the rulers and fellow-countrymen of the offenders are pirates, than the robberies and murders which are tried at our assizes would justify a sweeping imputation on our own national character. Let it be borne in mind also, that the word piracy is a very wide and elastic one. From the outlaw who makes rapine and murder his profession to the petty pilferer who pulls alongside of the fisherman's open boat and takes a sprat from it, every robber at sea is, in point of law, equally a pirate, though popularly the word is usually restricted to the professional criminal. I will mention one of the most "tremendous" piracies which occurred in the Straits during the fifteen years that I held judicial office there, because it is more than once cited in the blue books by an official disposed "to pile up the agony." Some forty or fifty followers of that great favourite of our Straits officials and merchants, Tunku Kudin, while engaged in blockading Mahdie, (sup. p. 35) saw, one morning, a small schooner at anchor three or four miles out at sea. Deserting their post, they pulled out to her; and finding her manned with nothing more formidable than three or four unarmed Hindoos, they carried off some £30 or £40 worth of piece goods, without doing any injury either to vessel or crew. Nobody questions the criminality of these Malays, for which they were duly punished; but when Straits officials frighten us with their "piracy" of the Straits of Malacca, this so often cited leading case shows in some measure what they mean.

2. Salangore.

The same sweeping accusation is made against their southern neighbours, the Malays of Salangore. In page after page of the Blue Book of 1875 (No. 1111), we read of "numerous piracies," "atrocious piracies," "piracies of formidable character," and so on, committed by these dreadful people. The Colonial Attorney-General frames the indictment in more specific and more formidable terms. "The Salangore pirates," he tell us, "are distinguished in the Malay seas as the most blood-thirsty and daring of all. . . . . They are said to be supported by nobles and even members of the royal family." Their "numerous rivers" are said to "afford shelter" to these pirates; though, somehow, it is not on their banks, but "up the creeks," that the villains have their "stockaded defences," from which they

pounce on their booty, and to which they then "retire out of reach of our ships." We are further informed by the same authority that "the piratical practices at Salangore differ from those in other parts of the peninsula in this, that they were continuous, well organized, and most daringly carried out" (1111, 185, &c.).

Let us remember that Salangore adjoins our settlement of Malacca, and is within a couple of hundred miles of Singapore, and that numbers of vessels, large and small, pass daily within sight of its coast; and then let us ask ourselves whether it is likely that the first naval Power on earth would have tolerated for a long series of years, or could have been successfully defied by a little piratical State with a population of perhaps 30,000 souls, close to its doors? If there was any truth in the charge, our men of war either must have been strangely asleep at their posts, or they must have had a very active time of it in supplying the colonial courts with candidates for the gallows. At all events, if the malefactors were invincible or unattainable, we should at least have heard the cries of some of their victims. But no crime was rarer in the calendar of the Straits courts than piracy. We never heard of our men-of-war having a brush with a Salangore fleet; and if any of our seafaring men who have plied for years in the Straits of Malacca are consulted, they say that they never saw a pirate or piratical craft in all their lives there.

When the Blue Book which contains these tremendous charges of "wholesale daring, continuous, and organized piracy," is searched for evidence in proof of them, three cases only are to be found. One was a crime of great atrocity, but it was committed by men from the shore, on a vessel so near it, that our authorities thought they could not try it in our courts as piracy. The second, styled by the Colonial Attorney-General an "attack on Rachado lighthouse" (1111. 187), shrinks, on examination, into an attempt to steal in a shed adjoining the lighthouse, by, it was said, four Malays who had been seen in an open boat near the lighthouse in the course of the day, and who fled precipitately on being interrupted by one of the native lighthouse men (101, &c.). In the third case, a small native schooner was fired upon, (without damage to ship or man indeed,) and robbed of a swivel, a couple of muskets and spears, five tin trays, and some ducks and fowls. This was piracy, unquestionably, but hardly of that terrible character which we are led to expect from the "daring and organized" bands of Salangore. We look in vain for the attendant horrors of scuttling and massacre. Instead of a villainous piratical "prahu," we find that the aggressor is a "wangkang," or vulgar lumbering trading vessel; and alas! instead of "Salangore Malays," with a noble at least, if not a member of the royal family, at their head, the pirates were Chinese (99).

Let us turn to the earlier book of 1872 (No. 465) and see whether it will better reward our researches after pirates. The very first page tells the story of the murders on board the Pinang junk by Chinese passengers, mentioned sup. p. 33. But the administrator, who writes it, does

not mention that the murderers were Chinese who had embarked as passengers at Pinang; and he leaves it to be inferred, as Lord Kimberley inferred, that they were Salangore Malays, for he asserts that there could be no doubt that Rajah Mahdie had, "for a very long time, been carrying on depredations of this nature undiscovered and undisturbed," both at Salangore and Kallang (465. 2). Reproved for the apparent imprudence of sending an unarmed vessel to Salangore, "considering the notorious character of the Salangore Malays," the same officer replied that he had never heard of anything but "petty piracies;" and that "there was no reason to suppose that there was any organized system of piracy in the Straits, no such case as the present having occurred for many years" (465. 36, 38). When Mahdie, not many months afterwards, took refuge in Johore, there was a loud demand in the colony for his extradition, and it is said that even the Colonial Minister manifested some surprise and displeasure at the inactivity of the local authorities. But their answer was simple; they had, they said, no evidence on which to found a charge that the man had ever been concerned in any such crime.[1]

The simple truth peeps out plainly enough, however, in the statement of the Attorney-General, that "the pirates are led by the personal enemies of Tunku Kudin;" and of Sir A. Clarke, that "the recent growth of piracy is due, in a great measure, to the political condition of Salangore" (1111. 91). But the latter supplies, beyond all doubt, the meaning which he attaches to the terms, in another despatch, where, after mentioning a "piracy," said to have been committed at Qualla Labu, a place thirty-five miles up the country, where a ship's barge would probably not float, he says that "the perpetrators were reported to be followers of rajahs Mahdie and Mahmoud, and that those chiefs, so celebrated as the originators of all the disturbances in Salangore, were on the point of making a supreme effort to

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[1] Mahdie cuts a fine melo-dramatic figure in one of those official memoranda on Malay pedigrees, dignities, and squabbles, which give the reader a fresh reason for adopting the principle of non-interference. The Governor, General Cavenagh, in 1867, steams to the Kallang, and sends his aide-de-camp to summon Mahdie to the steamer. The Malay refuses. He threatens to detain Captain Protheroe; and, indeed, the historian doubts whether he would not have been as good as his word, "if that officer had not startled him into more prudent behaviour, by a counter-threat to throw his lighted cigar among the powder and cartridges that Mahdie had before him" (465. 13). The truth, divested of its mythical overgrowth, is that Mahdie received Captain Protheroe with less than the ordinary Oriental courtesy, at first, for he mistook him for his enemy, the English farmer of the Kallang tolls (sup. 32). But when he discovered who Captain Protheroe was, his manner changed altogether. The threat and the "counter-threat," with the scenic effects of powder-barrels and other explosives, are but specimens of those fables which not only grow in Oriental soil, but seem to be digestible even by men of sense in the East.

throw the whole of the country again into confusion, and, spreading war and desolation among the mines and villages, to attack Tunku Kudin, and drive him from Kallang and Salangore" (1320. 7). Having got accustomed to this new meaning of the term, he is obliged, when referring to piracy in the ordinary sense, to speak of "*bonâ fide* acts of piracy" (1111. 92, 225).

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